

Alternate Routes

A Journal of Critical Social Research
Volume 10, 1993

Special Issue: Communications and Democracy


Communication, Culture and Power:
An Interview with Vincent Mosco

**Telecommunication Policy for Whom?
An Analysis of Recent CRTC Decisions**
Vanda Rideout

**Taking "Freedom of the Press" Seriously:
Critical Media Sociology
and the Challenge of Democracy**
David C. Robinson

**Reflections on the Reproduction
of Dictatorship in Iran:
Communication and Dictatorship**
Behnam Behnia

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ALTERNATE ROUTES
A Journal of Critical Social Research

PRESENTATION AND EDITORIAL POLICY

Alternate Routes is a refereed multi-disciplinary journal published annually by graduate students in the department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University in Ottawa. Our mandate is to make *Alternate Routes* a forum for debate and exchange among graduate students throughout the country and we are therefore interested in receiving papers written by graduate students (or co-authored with faculty), regardless of their university affiliation.

The editorial emphasis is on the publication of critical and provocative analyses of theoretical and substantive issues which clearly have relevance for progressive political intervention. Although we welcome papers on a broad range of topics, members of the editorial board work within a feminist and marxist tradition. Therefore, we encourage submissions which advance or challenge questions and contemporary issues raised by these two broadly defined perspectives. We also welcome responses to and reviews of recent publications.

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The editors gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance of the Carleton University community: the department of Sociology and Anthropology and its chairperson, Stephen Richer; the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, J.W. ApSimon. We wish to thank all the anonymous reviewers. The Board would like to extend a special note of thanks to David Hubka.

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Alternate Routes is seeking submissions for Volume 11, 1994. We are interested in receiving interdisciplinary analyses on a wide range of theoretical and substantive issues within the social sciences. Manuscripts will be anonymously reviewed by faculty members from academic institutions across the country. Please use the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing system and keep endnotes to a minimum. Papers should be submitted double-spaced and in triplicate. Floppy disks formatted in Wordperfect 5.1 or ASCII are required for papers accepted for publication.

We also welcome responses to and reviews of recent publications, book reviews, and discussions of work-in-progress.

Responses to this invitation to contribute should be postmarked no later than **29 October 1993**.

Alternate Routes est à la recherche d'articles pour sa publication de 1994, numéro 11. Nous sommes intéressés à recevoir des analyses interdisciplinaires portant sur un vaste éventail de questions théoriques et substantives propres aux sciences sociales. Les manuscrits seront critiqués de façon anonyme par des professeurs de diverses institutions académiques du pays. Nous vous invitons à suivre le système de référence de l'American Psychological Association (APA) et à limiter la quantité des notes de fin de document autant que possible. Les articles devraient être présentés en format double interligne et en trois copies. Une disquette devrait accompagner le document et contenir le texte sur logiciel Wordperfect 5.1 ou en codes ASCII.

Nous apprécierions par ailleurs recevoir des critiques des récentes publications, comptes rendus et travaux en cours.

Les réponses à cette invitation devraient être postées au plus tard le **29 octobre 1993** (le cachet de la poste en faisant foi).

Address to/Envoyez à: *Alternate Routes*
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1S 5B6

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INTRODUCTION: COMMUNICATIONS AND DEMOCRACY

Communication studies in Canada is an interdisciplinary field which encompasses diverse theoretical traditions and substantive problems. While it has drawn extensively upon traditions outside of the social sciences, historically many sociologists, such as Harold Innis, have made valuable contributions to communication research. Current research continues to range over a wide arena, including media studies, cultural studies, political economy, policy research, and feminist studies. This particular issue of *Alternate Routes* focuses on a major theme within contemporary discussions: the issue of communication and democracy.

Professor Vincent Mosco is a sociologist who plays a leading role in Canadian communication studies. In February 1993, he agreed to speak with the Editorial Board of *Alternate Routes* about his recent work. While Dr. Mosco's expertise is in the political economy of communications, the breadth and depth of his interests are apparent in this interview in which he explores contemporary debates over the nature of capitalist society, the relationships between cultural studies and political economy in communication studies, and the implications of globalization, deregulation, and privatization in the communication industries. Mosco's discussion highlights the profound theoretical and empirical challenges that scholars of communications face in the 1990s.

Vanda Rideout, a doctoral candidate at Carleton University and a former employee of Northern Telecom Canada Ltd., focuses more specifically on recent changes in telecommunications policy. Using the Poulantzian notion of 'power bloc', she shows that the recent shifts in Canadian telecommunications policy toward allowing more competition in key specialized services and long distance calling, works in favour of a hegemonic fraction consisting of the major financial institutions and large business users. The shift in policy means that increasing numbers of telecommunications services are no longer interpreted as requiring supervision and regulation in the public interest, but as requiring regulation to manage market forces. Consequently, she argues, the public service concept of universality is threatened and the democratic process in telecommunications eroded.

David Robinson, also a doctoral candidate at Carleton University, addresses the issue of democracy in terms of freedom of the press. His review suggests that news production studies have tended to either leave unelaborated a practical strategy for the development of a socialist and

democratic news media, or have proposed state administered solutions to offset market censorship. Recognizing the abuses of state control, however, Robinson proposes that socialists need to reconsider the democratic claims of writers like Tonnies, Dewey, and Habermas and begin to think about ways of extending public communications systems beyond the state and the market.

Behnam Behnia, a doctoral student from Carleton University, studies the impact of dictatorship on the conditions of communication. He considers the following question: why did Iranians, who during the 1979 Revolution demanded freedom and democracy, support the growth of another kind of dictatorship? He suggests that dictatorship, by abolishing democratic rights, undermines the conditions of communication. This, in turn, influences the institutions and social relationships through which members socially interact. In Iran 'distorted communication' led Iranians to form small, informal selective groups. In these groups the corporate rather than the universal perspective of democracy was likely to develop. Democracy came to consist of an ensemble of rules that protected the immediate interests of that particular group. Corporate democracy among Iranians, Behnia argues, is one of the factors that led to the establishment of the new dictatorship.

COMMUNICATION, CULTURE AND POWER: AN INTERVIEW WITH VINCENT MOSCO

Vincent Mosco is one of the foremost communication scholars specializing in the area of political economy. He is professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Carleton University and holds a research position with the Program on Information Resources Policy at Harvard where in 1975 he received the Ph.D. in sociology.

Professor Mosco is the author of three books and editor or co-editor of seven books on the political economy of the mass media, broadcasting and telecommunication policy, the social impacts of computers and information technology, and popular culture. His most recent are *The Political Economy of Information* (edited with Janet Wasko, University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), *The Pay-per Society* (Ablex and Garamond, 1989), *Democratic Communications in the Information Age* (edited with Janet Wasko, Ablex and Garamond, 1992), and *Illuminating the Blindspots: Essays Honoring Dallas Smythe* (edited with Janet Wasko and Manjunath Pendakur, Ablex, 1993). He has also published over sixty scholarly articles, reports and book chapters.

Professor Mosco is a founding member of the Union for Democratic Communication and is currently President of the Political Economy Section of the International Association for Mass Communication Research and a member of the editorial boards of academic journals in Canada, the U.S., England, and Spain.

His current research projects include *The Political Economy of Communication*, a book that addresses the theoretical foundations of the field and its relationship to economics, policy studies, and cultural studies; and an analysis of spatial and temporal transformations brought about by the application of computer communication in business and government.

Alternate Routes: One of the more interesting aspects of your recent work has been your attempt to 'demystify' terms like 'post-industrial society' and the 'information age'. Instead you propose that a much more apt description of contemporary social formations is the 'pay-per society'. What exactly do you intend to capture with this phrase? How does it differ from the 'information age' or 'post-industrial society'?

Vincent Mosco: As a bit of background, I'm a sociologist with a strong interest in communication. One of the things I've tried to do over the

years is to give communication studies a stronger theoretical grounding. The field has tended to draw more from psychology and some elements of pluralist political science, a far from rigorous treatment.

What I like about communication studies is that it raises questions that are central to the political economy of our culture as it is constituted and changing. My work tries to construct an analysis that is central to both the state of our theoretical understanding and to practical consciousness and common sense.

My last book, *The Pay-Per Society*, provided a touchstone notion for understanding the transformations that communication and information technology are bringing about in a colloquial expression that I seem to hear more and more in common discourse: references to 'pay-per-view' television, 'pay-per-call' in the telephone business, 'pay-per-keystroke' in the workplace. Advertisers refer to 'pay-per-body' when they deliver audiences to those who pay the bill. My goal was to develop a critique of what had become standard conceptions of post-industrialism and the information age by concentrating on this notion of 'pay-per'.

The idea itself refers more analytically to the ability of the new technologies to measure and to monitor information transactions and to package and repackage communication and information products on a scale heretofore considered at least difficult if not impossible. For example, the commercial television broadcasting industry was originally based on delivering audiences to advertisers. Today it is based on a pay-per-month charge with cable television, pay-per-channel with specialty channels and is now moving toward a full pay-per-view system.

In my thinking, this is a deepening and extension of the commodification of information, communication, and of the audiences that attend to programs. This lies at the heart of developments in the area that are not captured by notions like 'information age' and 'post-industrialism'. After all, what do we mean by 'the information age'? Does it mean that we have more information than ever before? Well, one might debate that, particularly when faced with the question, "who is 'we'" ? Yes, some have more, but some have less.

Similar problems arise with 'post-industrialism'. I was a student of Daniel Bell, so I'm intimately familiar with this notion. In fact, he sparked my interest in looking at the communication and information technologies. But when you examine critically the empirical work that

led to the notion of post-industrialism, you realize how wanting the term is.

For example, the major piece of research that led to the general use of the term 'post-industrialism' was a doctoral thesis completed at Stanford University by Mark Porat on the information economy. What he did was amass data on occupational shifts in American society. He looked at the growth of what he referred to as an 'information sector'. However, when you look in detail at the actual occupations that comprise that sector you find lumped together in the same category the Chief Executive Officers of transnational businesses and check-out counter clerks! Both are called 'knowledge-workers' or information workers. It seems to me that a term used to capture such fundamentally different power relations is of limited value. Consequently, it is more important to focus on the ways in which the new technologies influence the shape and the direction of capitalism. We need to look at how the technologies deepen and extend social relations organized largely around commodification and control. This process is what I see constituting a 'pay-per society'.

AR: Another descriptive phrase that has emerged in communications studies and other disciplines of late is 'post-Fordism', a term associated with a very diverse range of work. It loosely represents the view put forth by Lash and Urry (1987), Piore and Sabel (1984), the French 'Regulation School', and others that a new 'regime of accumulation' has emerged, one radically different from the standardized mass production characteristic of Fordism. The globalization of capital, a disaggregation of the mass consumer market into segmented niches, a decentralization and automation of the workplace, and a shift from industrial production toward service industries are, it is claimed, moving us into a decentralized, diversified, and differentiated social universe. Post-Fordist societies are more open, fluid, pluralistic and fragmented. In the case of the film industry, for example, Christopherson and Storper (1989) have argued that the major studios are no longer the giant vertically integrated oligopolies of Hollywood's Golden Age; today, they are characterized by product differentiation, vertical disintegration, and flexible specialization. Similar arguments have been made about the broadcasting and publishing industries. However, this seems to run counter to some of your observations about the increasing concentration of corporate power and the homogenization of cultural production. How do you assess post-

Fordism? Does it, in your mind, represent an adequate account of the forces shaping the contemporary cultural industries? Or is it just another version of the post-industrial society thesis?

VM: You are right to suggest that there is a vast literature in the area broadly defined as post-Fordism. There are also many differences within that literature. With that said, my reading of post-Fordism is that it has tended to focus on an element of capitalism that no one appreciated more than Marx: capitalism is remarkably dynamic, constantly transforming itself to advance accumulation, its fundamental *raison d'être*. My sense is that there is a tendency within this point of view to hold onto one element of the dynamic --- the tendency to deconstitution, deconcentration, and diversification. I don't want to suggest simplistic dichotomies or promote mechanistic thinking, but there is a tendency to save for the background tendencies to concentration, transnationalization, and a deepening of the accumulation process through the growth of a more controlled international division of labour, that leaves the post-Fordist view wanting.

When you look specifically at the media industry, the Christopherson and Storper example is a good one. They suggest, and quite rightfully, that the media business, specifically the film industry, is very much bound up with dynamic processes of capitalism that so interested Marx. But they tend to focus on one major element, finding in the growth of independent production companies evidence of a deconcentration of power. By doing this, they miss several fundamental points.

First, one can't understand the movie business within capitalism without seeing how that industry is bound up with and intimately linked to other elements of the cultural industries. Warner is part of Time-Warner, MCA is part of Matsushita, Columbia is part of the Sony empire. These reflect a deepening concentration across a range of media businesses.

A second thing they miss is that the film industry is based not simply on the production of movies, but on their distribution. Distribution is *absolutely critical* because it not only gets films into theatres but is responsible for finding financing and arranging marketing. Independent producers aren't capable of doing this. They depend on the majors to place their films into theatres. Marketing can now take upwards of thirty percent of the production costs of a film and even more

in the case of certain blockbusters. If anything, distribution has become more and more concentrated. That's especially the case here in Canada where Canadian-owned companies are kept out of theatres.

Finally, they ignore the ways that the growth of the independents contribute to the power of the majors. Essentially, the independents provide a way to externalize risk. Production is the most difficult dimension of the film industry --- it is the most labour-intensive and the most risky.

Of course it is important to recognize that there is a constant restructuring of industries like the film business. And the concentration model doesn't always work as well as it does in the media industries. Christopherson and Storper have chosen perhaps the most difficult case to establish the notion of deconcentration. They could go to other industries that post-Fordist theorists tend to be more fond of --- the automotive industry for example, where independent suppliers have some clout. The key point here is to recognize that a great deal of variability, of concentration and diversification, exist side-by-side which any model that would seek to understand the development of capitalism has to take into account.

When I look at developments in the media business, it is hard for me to avoid seeing the growth of concentration at a global level within an overall framework that allows for tendencies to diversification and independence as well. Now, does this constitute post-Fordism? Post-industrialism? Plain old capitalism? A new form of capitalism? These are important questions that media scholars need to address. One way to do so is within the tradition of political economy that approaches the social totality dialectically by taking into account a range of conflicting and competing forces.

AR: The issue of post-Fordism, of course, has also been highlighted by another tradition within communication studies: cultural studies. Post-Fordism is used by the so-called "New Times" Group associated with Stuart Hall (1989) and other authors once affiliated with *Marxism Today*. Angela McRobbie (1992) has employed some aspects of it in her discussion of cultural studies and "post-Marxism". Within this tradition, post-Fordism is employed to advance the idea that these alleged structural changes aren't just economic, that there is a certain cultural shift occurring as well. Post-Fordist societies, it is claimed, are much more discursive in nature. Social conflicts are organized less around the

struggles of capital and labour than around the struggle over signification and representation. Unlike some political economic approaches, cultural studies is more concerned with questions of subjectivity, audiences, and local resistance. In your book, *The Pay-Per Society*, you suggest that cultural studies and political economy would benefit by a closer collaboration. But I'm wondering, given this particular paradigm that contemporary cultural studies seems to be working with, what would that collaboration look like, and where would you start? Indeed, is it possible?

VM: It's interesting that you raise the question because it's something I'm working on right now in a book on the political economy of communications. One of the chapters will deal explicitly with challenges on the borders of the political economy of communication.

As I see it, there are two substantive intellectual challenges for this perspective. On the one hand, there's cultural studies, and I think you've outlined the challenge well. On the other side, there is a broadly defined domain of policy studies that comprises a great deal of communication research. But it has tended to be ignored in the dichotomization of the field into political economy and cultural studies. I think this misses a development of enormous importance --- a conservative wing of policy studies, so-called 'Public Choice Theory', or 'Positive Political Economy'. It has captured the imagination of the economics profession, of government policy makers around the world, and in fact has produced several Nobel Laureates in economics over the past few years.

We in sociology and communication studies cannot at all ignore this enormous challenge partly because thinkers from that perspective are going back to the tradition of Smithian classical economics to extend that conceptual apparatus to domains normally taken up by sociology. This includes the study of the family, of sexuality, and of social relations generally. Consequently we can't afford to overlook that domain. But you asked about cultural studies, so let me address that challenge.

I think it's important to recognize the contribution that cultural studies has made. Let me address how it's influencing my current thinking. First off, I think it has made an important contribution to epistemology. There has been a tendency within political economy to adopt epistemologies based on causal determination that are being considered excessively rigid by physicists, chemists and biologists and I

think ought to be considered so by the social sciences. Cultural studies has helped us to think about and develop non-essentialist epistemologies -- broadly inclusive notions that examine the social whole through the eyes of mutual constitution rather than causal determination. I think this is a significant turn of thinking that is quite useful.

Secondly, students of cultural studies have helped us to understand that culture is the product of the common sense, day-to-day practices of all people. The term 'popular culture' doesn't capture this well, but it has helped us to see that all social practices embody a cultural dimension. We ought not to privilege elite practices as constituting some special domain of culture separate from the practices of so-called ordinary people.

Thirdly, I think cultural studies has sensitized us to social relations and social divisions organized around gender and race, relations that at times are congruent with, and at other times clash with, class divisions. The latter have tended to occupy the central space in political economic analysis. In the case of gender, for example, I think cultural studies has taken a lead in, and presented us with the challenge of, addressing patriarchy within a class analysis.

With that said, I think one of the leading analysts in cultural studies, Michel Pêcheux, put it best when he argued that we need not replace the "narcissism of structure" with the "narcissism of the subject". It is ironic that in a discipline that would adopt non-essentialist epistemologies, there is a tendency to take an essentialist and deterministic vision of the subject --- the 'Subject' above everything else. My understanding is that cultural studies is a viewpoint that suggests that there are no longer meta-narratives, or privileged discourses. Well, if that's the case, how can one see the subject as the essential key to social understanding?

There is also a tendency within cultural studies to a simplistic reading of economics. Political economy is a field that ranges widely over disciplinary and social space. It is very complex and highly nuanced, with a wide range of clashing views. I think one way to build and reinforce the bridge between cultural studies and political economy is for people on both sides to pay more careful attention to each other's disciplines. Students of cultural studies need to develop a more nuanced reading of political economy rather than see it simply as economic and deterministic.

Finally, I think cultural studies could pay more attention to its

own accessibility. Again, I think it's ironic for a discipline, built upon the notion that we all produce culture and that culture ought to be accessible to all, to offer work that is so dense as to be largely inaccessible in most of its presentations to most of the producers of culture.

My sense is that it's essential for us to develop a dialogue between those who concentrate on the political economic approach and those who take a more culturalist understanding. We are both dealing with central elements of the social whole.

AR: Is there any particular empirical work you could point to that satisfactorily embodies both culturalist and political economic approaches?

VM: One touchstone for me is David Harvey's *Condition of Postmodernity*. He's among the few who have addressed *intelligently* the transformations taking place in the global political economy. He combines an understanding of technology, particularly computer communication technologies, with a grasp of wider social totalities *and* a knowledge of developments in culture. I look to his effort to bridge post-Fordist and postmodernist thinking as a model.

There are, I think, affinities between the structure of global banking --- what Marx initially referred to as the ability of capital to annihilate space with time --- and developments in architecture, popular music, and the like. One of our major challenges is to identify precisely what some of those affinities are while at the same time recognizing the differences and disjunctions. Harvey begins to move us in this direction.

A model of another sort is offered by Daniel Bell in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. He sees a fundamental *disjunction* between the rationalizing tendencies in the global political economy and what he refers to as hedonistic and irrational tendencies in the global culture. One doesn't necessarily have to accept that analysis to look at it for models of how institutional structures and streams of intellectual discourse can relate to one another. So, although we may consider ourselves political economists, we can't avoid looking at systems of thought, values and cultural practices.

AR: It's interesting that Harvey's book hasn't been taken up very seriously within cultural studies. For example, in the recent collection,

Cultural Studies, one person who mentions it is Angela McRobbie (1992) who simply characterizes it in passing as yet one more example of 'bad totalization'.

VM: I'm aware of the criticism of totalizing discourses of all sorts, and it's warranted when it is directed at a form of rarefied systems thinking that some sociology has fallen prey to over the years, beginning with Parsonian functionalism. But, and this is a major 'but', as a student of computer communications and mass media I see forms of integration that are so enormously powerful that it makes a sustained, comprehensive, if not totalizing analysis absolutely essential. Let me point to exemplars of this for a moment.

I want to focus on the field of computer communications. At the level of the product of computer communications --- call it data, information, or 'communication' --- we see forms of integration that involve turning content into a commodity. Now, to avoid charges of totalization, I'm not suggesting that it is *only* a commodity, that it is not subjectively experienced as discourse in a wide range of forms. But what appears to me central to understanding both the institutional development of computer communications and its expression, is the development of whole new forms of turning use value in information and communications into exchange value. There is integration *around* the notion of commodification, of making the product of communication and culture a marketable commodity. We see this everywhere in the transformation of public discourse into marketable products.

At the same time, we see forms of institutional integration. When I began working as a student in the field of sociology and communication, it was much easier to understand who the key players were. They were broadcasting companies, film companies and perhaps telephone companies. Things have changed in fundamental ways so that major producers of communication and information include banks, insurance companies, retail outlets, etc. CitiCorp is one of the largest producers of video in the world. It also happens to be one of the largest banks. What we're experiencing is an enormous institutional integration around communication and information.

At a third level, there is an integration across industries. We used to comfortably make a distinction between broadcasting, film, telecommunication and the information industry. However, when we see AT&T, for example, reconstructing itself from a telephone company into

an information-provider, a video company, and a cable television firm, the distinction that neatly divided this arena into industry segments no longer holds. Globally, we see an increasingly integrated electronic services industry.

Finally, there's integration within technology. We're involved in a linguistic transformation from technologies organized around analog principles that essentially correspond to human voice, to technologies organized around digital principles, a common language that derives from computer technology and the development of systems of software.

There are, of course, exceptions, but we're seeing *incredible* integration around the commodity, the institution, the arena, and the technology. So, I tend to resist yielding to those who would simply avoid notions like totality and integration. Anyone serious about a dialectical analysis recognizes the importance of the 'local', whether this is understood in a social structural or a cultural sense, as a source of difference, of resistance. But the local appears to me, as a result of developments in communications, to be increasingly well-integrated within a wider social totality.

AR: Related to this global integration of communications systems, the CRTC recently decided to allow competition in long distance services. Subsequently, AT&T has made incursions into the Canadian market by way of UNITEL, and Bell Canada has applied to the CRTC to raise local rates by sixty percent. Deregulation, you have argued, can be directly related to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Perhaps you could explain this connection, especially in the context of the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement. How will NAFTA affect the communications and cultural industries in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico?

VM: One element is the integration of the global telecommunication industry. This is a result of both the generalized stagnation in capitalist economies and the turn to neo-conservative governments that have restructured social and institutional relations to get the growth engine going again. In essence, I see this as a transition in --- to use a increasingly popular expression --- a 'regime of accumulation'. The previous regime was organized around forms of monopolistic regulation based on notions of information as a public good. It also entailed the development of national instruments of accumulation like Bell Canada, and the commitment to support a full-time, skilled labour force. Today,

we see a transition from this regime to one organized around advancing information as a commodity. Regulation in the broadly defined public interest is redefined to meet the needs of business users of communication by managing competition in their interests. It involves supporting the transformation of labour within this new regime by promoting policies that would advance part-time, deskilled labour as an instrument to advance accumulation.

Decisions at the CRTC, in essence, have been trying to advance the latter and to introduce forms of competition that expand choice principally for large business users. There are a number of levers that the state has been using to advance this new regime. CRTC policy has been one of them. Federal legislation has been another. Trade agreements constitute a third.

The Canada-U.S. agreement touched on a number of important areas of telecommunication. For one, it legitimized the deregulation of what are called 'enhanced telecommunications services'. The distinction in the business is between 'basic' and 'enhanced' services. Basic service constitutes the ordinary use of the telephone --- voice communication. Enhanced services take up all the other uses: data transmission, electronic mail, etc. That sector is growing. It still comprises a relatively small amount of the entire telecom business, but it's the growth sector.

Broadly speaking, the goal is to deregulate the sector so that business users get to decide policy about enhanced services. What they need is the maximum amount of bandwidth in communication channels at the lowest price and with the greatest security controls. Taking enhanced services *out* of the hands of a national regulator and placing their jurisdiction in an international regulatory apparatus largely controlled by transnational business makes it more likely that nations will harmonize policies and regulations around the enhanced services in the interests of transnational business.

At the same time, the Canada-U.S. agreement *restricted* a practice that has been central to the development of Canadian communication and information industries: the establishment of crown corporations or national monopolies. It essentially makes it impossible for a nation to live within the agreement and at the same time produce a new national entity to advance a particular sector of communication development.

For example, if we wanted to create a 21st century version of the CBC --- a national, public computer communication institution that would provide end-to-end services for households irrespective of their ability to

pay --- the Canada-U.S. agreement would make it impossible to do so without abrogating the deal. Furthermore, much has been made of the so-called 'cultural exemption' in the Canada-U.S. agreement. Indeed, one clause in the agreement notes that culture is exempt. The very next clause, however, provides what many perceive to be an important loophole. It essentially says that either party can take measures of 'equivalent commercial effect' against the other if it feels that the other party is restricting trade in the cultural industries. That doesn't strike me as a terribly potent cultural exemption.

More generally, the FTA is an effort to harmonize global policies and generate a model for transnational business control of the growing electronic services sector. The next step, of course, is to incorporate Mexico. There are also moves at the GATT and in other bodies to do the same. The OECD has been advancing these policies for years. Though the movement is not entirely without resistance, there have certainly been strong tendencies toward building a transnational information and electronic services order.

Essentially, NAFTA extends the principles of the Canada-U.S. deal to incorporate Mexico. All of this is situated within the context of the liberalization and privatization of telecommunications systems. There are very significant consequences at stake. Given an integrated view of the political economy of information, we recognize that more is at stake than simply the local issue of who controls telecommunication. The issue here, more broadly, is building what Dan Schiller refers to as a 'global grid' or global information communication 'highway', and determining who has access to it. Who controls it, what are prices charged for the use of it, and who benefits from it?

One of the reasons why I have close affinities to a more geographically-oriented school of thought that people like Harvey and others are developing, is that when you look at communication information, you see a redrawing of the global map, reconstituting what they refer to as 'the space of flows' --- the flows of communication and information. By overcoming what would be considered 'traditional' boundaries drawn along national, ethnic and other lines, these information flows are being reconstituted around clear, unimpeded links of capital. And NAFTA is a step in that direction, one piece in the puzzle.

AR: We've seen in other countries --- Great Britain, the United States and New Zealand --- that deregulation means customers tend to pay more

for the same level of service or less. In such cases, universal access to telecommunications systems has been undermined. You've already mentioned that 'deregulation' is in fact a shift in the site of managed regulation from the nation-state to transnational corporations. In this sense, isn't 'deregulation' a bit of a misnomer?

VM: Deregulation is a myth. It's a euphemism. One would think that it would mean less regulation but it doesn't. Wherever policies advancing deregulation have been put into place, more regulation has resulted: Britain, Japan, the U.S. and now Canada. In fact, the CRTC expects to increase its staff to enhance its ability to deregulate!

When we step back from that euphemism we realize that regulation is a general societal process embodied in different forms, including regulating in the broadly defined 'public interest' and regulating in order to manage what's called 'competition'. There's another myth or euphemism: that policies are *advancing* competition. What governments are doing is instituting duopoly and cartel-like arrangements, permitting one or another firm to enter the market in order to prod a dominant provider (like AT&T, or Bell, or British Telecom) to transform itself along business lines. This is another euphemism for the ability to serve the demands of large business users: banks, insurance companies, and other heavy users of electronic services.

Yet another euphemism is that of 'cost-based pricing'. Costing in any industry is an arcane and very complex 'non-science'. It's particularly interesting in the telecommunication world, partly because this has been an industry very much open to political contestation. It's one in which unions have been strong in defending both their jobs and the maintenance of universal service, and one in which consumer organizations have registered strong social pressures over the years.

Costing has always been politicized. It's also particularly interesting in telecommunication because the notion of the telephone call is wrapped in mythology. That is, the distinction we make between 'local' and 'long-distance' is a subjective construct that grows out of social practice, political pressure, and class struggle. One can look at the history of telecommunication and the shifting definitions of the price of service along these lines. When I hear people talk about the need to move from public pricing to cost-based pricing, I recognize another myth in the making. It implies that long-distance charges have for years subsidized local rates and in order to achieve economic efficiency we

have to unbundle that subsidy and distinguish explicitly local from long distance, thereby ensuring economic efficiency.

That, of course, is all predicated on knowing precisely what makes up the cost of a local and a long distance call. That itself is a process of social construction and social contestation. Anthony Oettinger who has written on this and intervened in policy processes over the years, refers to cost regulation as a 'fairy tale' that is reinvented over time to reflect the balance of political forces in the industry. Essentially we're reinventing the myth today to advance the interests of large business users.

The argument is that the local end of the telecommunications systems doesn't bear its share of the costs, and we reinvent the definitions and methods of the costing process so that we can, in essence, redistribute income. By making the local customer bear more and more of the price of telecommunication, we engage in that conservative shibboleth of social engineering.

The U.S. has put this in place in a vast multi-billion dollar redistribution of income from the telecommunication 'have-nots' to the 'haves'. Everyone makes local calls, but lower income users tend to be much more dependent on the local use of the telephone. Eighty percent of long distance calls are made by twenty percent of customers. Those customers include you and me, but in the main they're concentrated among businesses that move vast amounts of voice, data, and video communication around the world. The notion of cost-based pricing, then, legitimizes a vast redistribution of income.

In essence, then, 'deregulation' is really both a redistribution of political power *and* a redistribution of income among customers. We've seen the consequences of this. In the United States, the price of local telephone calls has increased one hundred to two hundred percent over the last seven or eight years, depending on the jurisdiction. Similar results are observed in Britain, in Japan, and with Bell's proposal for rate hikes in major markets in Canada, we are seeing the consequences of the application of this principle here.

This threatens both traditional notions of universalism, where every household has a telephone, and new definitions of universalism that we may want to develop for a post-telephone era. The United States has been able to maintain a level of household penetration of the telephone over ninety percent, only by instituting a national welfare program. For the first time in American history, each of the fifty U.S. states has a form

of what industry people like to refer to as 'targeted subsidies', another euphemism for a 'telephone welfare system'. This program includes a means test, an administrative bureaucracy, and a policing system --- all of the constituents of a social welfare apparatus.

What was considered a right of citizenship, the telephone, now becomes something that the poor can only acquire after a visit to a welfare office or the social assistance division of a telecommunications company. It's a patchwork of fifty different systems in different states; so you may be eligible in South Carolina but not in Oregon. Ironically, under right-wing regimes, we see the re-institution of what neo-conservatives *themselves* considered to be failed welfare programs.

I think there are very important lessons here for Canada. There's a challenge for those of us who support the public interest and universality to think about alternatives to traditional ways of making policy in this area.

AR: In terms of making policy, opposition to these recent developments seem to have accepted a rigid and, as you suggest, perhaps dubious dichotomy between regulation (state solutions) and deregulation (market solutions). Do you think this way of thinking represents an adequate oppositional strategy? Or is there a need to develop conceptual frameworks that move beyond this dichotomy and begin to re-think how a democratic communications system could be organized?

VM: First, I think it's very important to acknowledge the gains that we have made from state policies. I realize it's not fashionable to praise state intervention. But nevertheless, we enjoy a public education system, a public health system, and a universal telecommunication and public service television system. Granted, there are enormous faults with all of them. However, they provide a measure of benefit to a wide population, a benefit that is there partly because social movements organized around state intervention pressured the state to protect the public interest. I think it's absolutely essential for us to acknowledge that and to continue to see state intervention, for all its complexity and range of positive and negative consequences, as one means of realizing widespread social gain.

However, it is not the *only* instrument. One of the challenges we face in democratizing systems of communication and information is to reflect on what citizenship means in this set of social practices we call communication. We criticize neo-classical economics for reducing needs

to wants and citizens to consumers. I think we're correct in doing so. But we have to direct our attention to what the needs are and what citizenship requires. We've barely begun that debate and discussion.

There are models for this. There is a social policy literature having to do with needs for housing, food, and other 'essentials'. We need to begin to take up the issue of 'need' in communication and information services. This is far from frivolous; it's not simply a question of how many sitcoms everyone has a right to watch at night, but rather what our access to vital communication and information services will be like in the future. Many people will be left essentially communication-illiterate if information is put on a pay-per basis.

One of our jobs as intellectuals is to think about and propose what constitutes packages of information services as instruments to build citizenship. Sociology over the years has been very slow to take up these issues. It's very important to place citizenship at the centre of sociological questions.

Let's look at what constitutes universality in the area of telecommunications. Traditionally we've defined it as a telephone in every household. That kind of technicist definition needs to be discarded. Universality can be constituted through a range of technological means, but we have to ask some questions: what *are* those means and what are the range of services that different technologies can provide. We need to organize universality around needs, with an eye not to the consumer who participates in exchange value, but to the citizen. As your question suggests, we need to move beyond looking at the state as sole locus of decision-making and of social intervention on behalf of the public interest.

In this country there is a strong tradition of both statist and non-statist activity in this area. We've built a state broadcasting system that is the envy of many nations. At the same, as Marc Raboy has noted, investing in state broadcasting has shortchanged opportunities to develop a more broadly based social broadcasting system organized around communities and social movements. Consequently, community radio in the United States is much more advanced than it is in Canada because there isn't a tradition of state broadcasting against which community radio has to compete.

On the other hand, trade unions in the area of communication and telecommunication have been stronger in Canada than they have been elsewhere. I don't know if there's another example of a union quite like

the Telephone Workers Union in British Columbia. In her book *That Long Distance Feeling*, Elaine Bernard chronicles how this union took over the Vancouver telephone system to show that a strike could involve more than simply shutting down a service. She describes how workers took control and ran it themselves. I think there are alternative models here for achieving the public interest outside of simply marching down to the CRTC.

AR: But the increased corporate presence in public spaces doesn't auger very well for the issue of citizenship and democracy. As you've shown in your work, democracy is not just having access to technology, but also involves having spaces in which you can participate in a public form of communication. And corporations are increasingly taking over that public space, from the classrooms and lecture halls to museums and public gatherings.

VM: Absolutely.

AR: But where does that leave us as researchers? How do we address these issues? In essence, I'd like to know where you think communications research should go in the future?

VM: I think it's a good question to ask because we haven't spent much time talking about communication as a discipline. One of the things that I've tried to do over the years is to draw out the strong political economy tradition within communication scholarship, something that has, in my view, received remarkably little attention. There are exceptions of course. I think particularly of the contribution of a Canadian who died just a few months ago, Dallas Smythe. His book *Dependency Road* and his other writings in the field established an important political economy base in communication research.

One of the things that communication research needs to do is to situate itself more explicitly within major theoretical debates taking place in sociology, political science and economics. It is in a good position to do so because the substance of the discipline is something that is being talked about across a wide range of other disciplines. What communications as a discipline needs to do is insert itself more explicitly, as a community of scholars and as a discourse community, in this wider intellectual milieu.

There is increasing likelihood that it will do that. The North American critical scholars in the field have developed the Union for Democratic Communication, which, for the last ten years, has organized academics, students and media practitioners to present a critical voice. Media practitioners specifically have organized independent forms of political agitation. I think of Paper Tiger Television, an independent production and distribution company and South End Press, a community collective press in the U.S., that have involved more of a consciously constructed social intervention.

We have to recognize ourselves as critical scholars committed to praxis; to see ourselves as organic intellectuals, not as academic careerists. If we are true to our 'Gramsci-ite' views, then we recognize that in our practice, we are not involved in simply establishing a discipline, but in transforming the world. And doing that involves stepping outside of our disciplinary boundaries to take on the role of public intellectual and political activist.

Over the years, I have tried to reflect that range. At the moment I'm committed to research that will secure a more widely accepted place for the political economy of communication. At the same time, I'm committed to political activism. Communication offers a wide number of opportunities in that domain --- that's one of its real strengths. One can think about conceptualizing the political economy of communication and, at the same time work with trade unions and social movement organizations to create a democratic alternative to established communication systems.

AR: Thank you.

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TELECOMMUNICATION POLICY FOR WHOM? AN ANALYSIS OF RECENT CRTC DECISIONS

Vanda Rideout
Carleton University

Structural Theoretical Considerations

This paper critically examines political and sociological relations in public telecommunication policy by arguing that the Canadian state has and continues to play an important role in forging and shaping a competitive telecommunication environment. Federal telecommunication decisions approved by the state regulator, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), are examined from the years 1977 to 1990. The pro-competitive policies approved by the CRTC reflect the state's shift from regulating rates and capital expansion programs by monopoly telecommunication providers (Bell Canada and BC Tel), toward permitting competition for an array of business services supplied by monopoly, as well as new, telecommunication providers. Competition in telecommunication business services has, paradoxically, resulted in a more regulated telecommunication environment; one in which there is less regulation in the public interest but more regulation to manage market forces.

Structural theory (Poulantzas, 1973, 1978; Offe, 1984; Mahon 1980, 1984; Jessop, 1991) best allows us to analyze the role that the CRTC takes in formulating pro-competitive telecommunication policy. To get a more complete picture of this it is necessary to interpret and analyze the state's responses to changes in the nature of capitalism.

Structural state theory reveals that the primary function of the state in a capitalist society is to serve the interests of the ruling class by creating and maintaining conditions favourable for capital accumulation. The state must also reduce the inherent conflicts between fractions of capital, the working class, and forces within civil society. Furthermore, the state has to create and maintain conditions of social harmony by producing policies which legitimize capitalist social relations. Structural theory, therefore, explains how the relationship between the ruling class and the state is a complex one in which the state serves the capitalist class without appearing to do so.

As part of its ideological function, the state re-defines workers,

civil society groups, and capitalists politically as individual subjects, a process that Carnoy (1984:99) calls 'individualization'. This process of individualization, realized through legal and political ideology, isolates workers and capitalists from their respective class positions. This is why, in Poulantzas' view, the capitalist class chooses a 'democratic state' as an expression of class power. The process of capitalist production defines the formation of classes, but the state reconstitutes buyers and sellers of labour politically as individual subjects, subjects free of any 'class-belongingness'. The state reinforces this belief by presenting itself "as representing the general interest of the competing groups" (Carnoy, 1984:100).

The Dominant Power Bloc, Capitalist Fractions and Relative Autonomy: Poulantzas' (1973, 1978) work shows how the state provides the framework for struggles between dominant and subordinate classes, both reintegrated as 'individuals' detached from any class position. At the same time, the state provides the political arena for and is itself shaped by the class struggle. The state unifies the reintegrated dominant class and subordinate class so that capitalist society is reproduced in a class structure. Nonetheless, contradictions arise through the relationship between the state and the dominant class, and through the state's relationship to the working class and civil society groups.

Poulantzas (1973:43-4) explains that the state plays a principle role in organizing and unifying the dominant class. He argues that the capitalist class is itself internally divided into a number of competing elements, substructures, or *fractions*. Members of the dominant class compete among themselves, forging alliances in the process. Frequently, alliances function under leadership of one of the fractions. The power alliance that these capital fractions make is called the *power bloc*. The leadership which unites the power bloc under its stewardship is the *hegemonic fraction* which guarantees that the general interest of the ruling class is realized through the state.

Structural theory moves beyond the notion that the state is the captive agent of the capitalist class, arguing instead that the state is relatively autonomous. As Poulantzas (1978: 313) notes, this implies that there is a relative separation of economic power from political power. Hence, political struggles tend to conceal their economic and class basis. The state thus tends to constitute class unity for the capitalist class in isolation from the economic struggle. Moreover, the relative autonomy

of the state sanctions the unity of individual capitalists, reconstituted into fractions and a dominant bloc, to further their political ideological operation and to constitute their political interests.

Poulantzas's concept of the relative autonomy of the capitalist state is used to underline how the operations of the state correspond to the political interest of the dominant class. This means that the degree, extent, and form of the state's relative autonomy can only be examined with reference to the class struggle.

Both Poulantzas (1973) and Mahon (1984) argue that the concept of relative autonomy also means that other forces can advance and realize their interests. For example, as will be shown below, the CRTC encourages a compromise of competing interests, but this does not mean that Bell Canada and BC Tel are forced to make unlimited concessions to other dominant class fractions or to the subordinate class in order to maintain their privileged hegemonic position.

According to Jessop (1991:92), it is also important to examine the infra-structural power of the state in this context --- the manner in which the state shapes the spatial, temporal, corporeal and social order of capitalist society. Using the telecommunication regulatory process as an example, one can see that those 'closest' to state power benefit the most (i.e. Bell Canada, BC Tel, Unitel, BC Rail/Lightel, and the large telecommunication users), while those furthest away benefit the least. This process helps to further fragment the subordinate class's resistance.

State Regulation and Unequal Representation: Mahon's (1980:160) contribution to structuralist theory is her explanation of how the state politically organizes the strategies and compromises necessary to maintain the capitalist system, while at the same time develops policies that benefit the leading fraction. She maintains that a regulatory agency's role is a dual one. First, it represents the interests of the regulated and it subordinates their interests to the long term interests of the hegemonic fraction. Second, the regulatory agency is a special case because it is independent of regular state departments and the political apparatus. Hearings are adversarial and are open to competing private inputs. Furthermore, the agency's authority is linked to its capacity to make politically neutral technical judgements. A regulatory agency is an "unequal structure of representation" (1980:159), a structure of bias that organizes the interests of various social forces around the core interests of the hegemonic fraction, thus creating an "equilibrium of compromises"

(1980:159).

Similarly, the state arranges and reorganizes the political relations of class domination through its policy agenda. In this way, the state supports and maintains political struggle through its function as a political organizer of various dominant fractions, non-dominant capitalists and subordinate classes. Resulting compromises may give access to, and representation for, the subordinate class. All members of the subordinate class have been and continue to be, active participants in the regulatory process. While the conditions won by the subordinate class must be more than symbolic if their consent is to be secured, the regulatory process and policy compromises, on the whole, help to disorganize and fragment this class.

The state also provides suitable conditions for the organization of capitalist fractions into a power bloc, while aiding in the reproduction of capitalist hegemonic domination. For example, compromises reached between Bell/BC Tel and the new telecommunication providers were created by the CRTC in order to neutralize the threat to hegemony that could not be contained by normal functioning of the political apparatus of the state. The CRTC is an instrument of hegemony because it arranges compromises that reflect a combination of the demands of the regulated (Bell and BC Tel), other capitalist fractions (the larger user groups and the new telecommunication providers), and subordinate classes.

By applying structural analyses to CRTC decisions, I will argue below that the settlement of these disputes and demands entails more than regulating telecommunication monopoly pricing and limiting competition. The CRTC's decision to permit telecommunication competition in key areas furthers the interest of the whole capitalist class, not just a dominant fraction. Pro-competition telecommunication decisions also serve dominant economic interests by facilitating the international integration of economies, a process reflected most notably by the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

The State as Crisis Manager: When problems arise in the accumulation process the state responds with specific policies in order to maintain this process. Responding to economic crisis through policy intervention, the state acts as a crisis manager (Offe and Range, 1982:253). State policy is an attempt to neutralize economic contradictions. Such policies are designed to enhance stability of the

whole capital accumulation process, rather than advance the interests of one dominant fraction. Some policies are geared towards continental or global accumulation, such as the telecommunication enhanced service decisions. Other policies reorganize the importance of exchange relationships among capital fractions. As Offe (1982:254-6) argues, policy shifts subject the dominant bloc to new rules in order to provide for economic growth and the survival of the larger capitalist class. With its renewed role as crisis manager, the state shifts the focus of public policy to meet the competitive demands of private sector market criteria. At the same time, the policy shifts intensify class conflict by reinscribing these social and political struggles to the state administrative apparatus, such as the CRTC.

In Canadian telecommunication, the dominant bloc (Bell Canada and BC Tel) has been subjected to new rules. The old 'natural monopoly' has been changed in a number of specific areas: mobile telephone services; interconnection and private line voice service, terminal attachment, enhanced services; resale and sharing; rate rebalancing and the new resale and sharing application that permits existing and new telecommunication service providers to meet the demands of the large telecommunication users.

Structural Telecommunication Relations

A structural model of state telecommunication relations is presented in Figure 1. The model identifies the major participants in the power bloc, organized according to their structural position within the federal telecommunication system. The model helps to explain the relations evident in the telecommunication field as well as the policy strategies by capitalist fractions, the state, and subordinate classes. This section describes how each capital fraction and the subordinate class attempt to influence and change these relations.

The Dominant Power Bloc:

(i) The Established Powers. It is useful to begin telecommunication policy analysis by identifying the dominant power bloc because the interests of these organizations set the pattern for other forces in the system. Bell Canada and BC Tel are the established powers in telecommunication. Until recently, their dominant position was met with only minor challenges from other capitalist fractions and from the

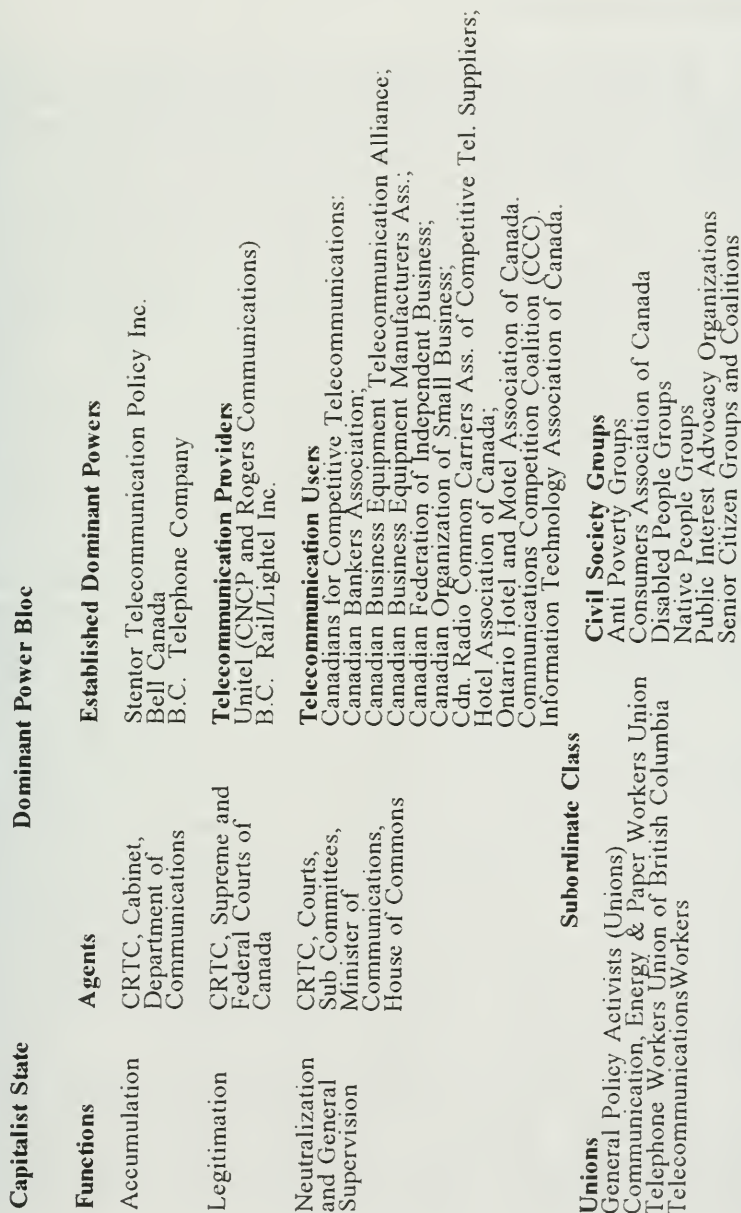
federal government. Bell Canada and BC Tel held a virtual monopoly on local and long distance residential and business telephone communications. Responding to earlier conflicts, the state regulated this bloc to meet the social demands of subordinate classes by holding the companies publicly accountable for rate increases and capital expansion plans (Babe, 1990:91-101).¹

(ii) Telecommunication Domestic Challengers. The major challenger to the hegemony of the established powers within the telecommunication industry has been CNCP Communications. CNCP recently amalgamated with Rogers Communications and is now known as Unitel. In 1979 CNCP petitioned the CRTC to allow it to connect to Bell Canada's network in order to provide voice service to its private line customers; CNCP launched a similar challenge to BC Tel's monopoly position in 1981 (Telecom Decisions CRTC 79-11 and 81-24).² Both CRTC decisions allowed CNCP customers dial-up access for its voice and data business services.

Similar challenges came from would-be telecommunication service providers such as Challenge Communications, Harding Communications, and Call-Net. They also lobbied the state for a 'liberalized' terminal attachment policy similar to the one granted CNCP. The CRTC responded with an interim decision followed by a final decision permitting terminal attachment to Bell's telephone network (Telecom Decisions CRTC 80-13 and 82-14). Moreover, it was decided to permit residential customers to own their phones, rather than being obligated to rent them from the telephone companies.

CNCP Communications made a second challenge to the dominant bloc in 1985. Their application to the CRTC requested approval to interconnect to Bell Canada and BC Tel in order to provide long distance telephone services for their business customers. The subsequent CRTC ruling (Telecom CRTC 85-19) is considered by many to be a watershed decision (Janisch, 1986; Stanbury, 1986; Woodrow and Woodside, 1986). Although the CRTC denied CNCP's request to compete in long distance voice services and private voice services such as MTS, WATS and PBX,³ Telecom Decision CRTC 85-19 encouraged the formation of more powerful telecommunication-user affiliations, coalitions and lobby groups.

Figure 1: A Structural Model of State Telecommunication Relations



Source: Adapted from Mosco, 1982; McPhail and McPhail 1988.

The second major challenger, BC Rail Telecommunications - Lightel Inc. (BCRL), participated in the recent CRTC hearings for permission to provide long distance service (Telecom Public Notice 1990-73). BCRL is a joint venture company operated by BC Rail Ltd., Call-Net, and Lightel Inc. It is not presently operational except as a legal paper organization. BC Rail Ltd. operates a microwave network. Lightel, owned by Call-Net, operates a fibre route from Toronto to Fort Erie and is also presently negotiating a right of way agreement with CN Rail. Call-Net and Lightel form a facilities-based reselling service.

What is significant about the BCRL application is that Call-Net, as a re-seller of enhanced services and value added services, interconnects its switches to facilities leased from Unitel. It also connects with the U.S. carrier, Sprint, and has an exchange agreement with Rochester Communications Inc. (Interrogatories BCRL (Bell) 14 Sept 90-100-105 1C2). BCRL plans to build a number of facilities in Canada and another supplier (perhaps Sprint) is to build facilities along the Canada-U.S. border. The BCRL application thus represents the creation of a potential bypass network.⁴ As a microwave fibre network, BCRL could provide a private MTS/WATS-like service, selling only to large business users. Rather than develop their own private networks, it would benefit the large telecommunication users to have one approved by the CRTC in place.

(iii) Policy Recommendations by Telecommunication User Associations. The list of telecommunication users in Figure 1 reveals that a number of broad-based associations and coalitions have been formed. These act to unite competing capitalists into a counter-hegemonic bloc. The associations and coalitions, all heavy communication users, have combined into these lobby groups to influence and promote telecommunication competition in the state policy-making process. The members of the associations and coalitions represent various capital fractions such as finance, manufacturing, and service industries. They form the lion's share of the large corporate and business telecommunication users.

The telecommunication users formed these umbrella associations to get cheaper, efficient, flexible, integrated, and specially designed telecommunication services. The large users and the new telecommunication providers recognize the importance and significance of telecommunication. Telecommunication is no longer simply a business operating cost. Recent technological advances in the industry

have generated new services which can be sold as commodities. Unlike other goods, however, telecommunication service commodities have an never-ending life; they may be (re)commodified into various additional services and re-sold. Cheaper and specialized services are, in the users' view, necessary in order to take advantage of competitive markets domestically, continentally, and internationally.

Canadians for Competitive Telecommunications (CCT) includes the following groups and associations: Canadian Association of Data and Professional Service Organizations, Canadian Bankers Association, Canadian Business Equipment Manufacturers Association, Canadian Business Telecommunications Alliance, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Canadian Organization of Small Business, Canadian Radio Common Carriers Association, Hotel Association of Canada, and the Ontario Hotel and Motel Association. Formed after the CRTC rejection of CNCP's application in 1985, the coalition expected their united views to influence federal policy outcomes. Their report, *The Crisis for Canadian Business: Telecommunication Rates and the Public Interest* (1986), argues that policy makers should reduce long distance rates for the business community because industries involved in the distribution of goods and services cannot improve their productivity in the face of excessive long distance rates. In Canada, long distance rates represent the third highest business operating cost, after wages and capital expenditures. For example, long distance and private bulk line rates for teleordering and telemarketing are 50 to 100 percent higher in Canada than in the United States. The CCT report warns that if telecommunication rates are not lowered Canadian businesses will simply bypass the Canadian system and use American systems.

Two policy reports were prepared by the Canadian Bankers Association (Taylor, 1989) and the Canadian Business Telecommunication Alliance (CBTA, 1989). The Canadian Bankers Association, and specifically the Royal Bank, recommended that telecommunications should be set more firmly under federal jurisdiction and that policy should be centrally regulated.⁵ The Canadian Business Telecommunication Alliance, following the position taken by the Business Council on National Issues (Langille, 1987:43-44), favoured a market driven telecommunication environment with less or no government regulation. Both the Canadian Bankers Association and CBTA are ideologically aligned with neo-liberal demands for a return to 'free enterprise'.

The Communications Competition Coalition (CCC) was formed in November 1989 to lobby and influence the Department of Communications, the CRTC, and other government departments and agencies. Membership includes company presidents and corporate executive officers of 150 Canadian corporations.⁶ The CCC supports an economic policy model of telecommunications, one which relies on the market rather than a regulated duopoly. Finally, the Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC) represents approximately sixty members from information and technology companies. ITAC supports the Free Trade Agreement, and argues that Canadian businesses must be internationally competitive and that telecommunication policy must be restructured to meet these challenges (ITAC, 1989).

These large telecommunication users have concentrated and consolidated their positions by forming these powerful pro-competition lobby groups in order to influence the federal government to pass telecommunication decisions which reflect their position. User coalitions and associations have made policy recommendations suggesting how the state should: (a) formulate general national policy; (b) ensure that all telecommunications fall under federal regulation; and (c) determine that there be little or no state regulation of telecommunications.

(iv) Bell Canada's Response. Bell Canada responded to the issue of what was, in their view, excessive state regulation by reorganizing itself into Bell Canada Enterprises (BCE). The reorganization was approved by the Federal government's Bill C-19 and Telecom Decision CRTC 83-10. Prior to Bill C-19 Bell was almost entirely state regulated; after the BCE reorganization only telephone services were regulated.

Bell has also responded to increased competition by introducing major discounts for both residential and business users who call Canadian and/or American destinations. The discount packages, 'Between Friends' and 'Teleplus Canada', are part of a large offensive mounted by Bell to counter the various challengers (Telecom Decision CRTC 88-19). Other discount packages have been filed with the CRTC for special purposes business long distance lines. One package, called Megalink, is based on the international standard for Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) (Surtees, December 3, 1990:B4). This discount package is aimed at medium and large corporate customers.

A second response by Bell Canada is their plan to rebalance telephone rates. It is claimed that if competition is permitted in long distance services, local rates will have to be rebalanced to counter the

current subsidy they receive from long distance revenues (Telecom Decision CRTC 88-4). Bell's rate rebalancing proposal, and the Phase III Costing study, reveals that in order to reduce long distance and MTS/WATS charges, subsidization would have to stop and local usage would have to increase (Telecom Decisions CRTC 88-4; 89-17; 85-19).

Bell's proposal to increase residential subscribers' local rates is coupled with its support of some form of targeted subsidies for needy subscribers. Targeted subsidies are part of the current discourse of telecommunication policy liberalization, a discourse that camouflages the effects of competition on low and fixed income subscribers. Targeted subsidies do not address the needs of those subscribers who are currently barely able to maintain their services. Similarly, they ignore regional disparities as well as the differences between urban and rural subscribers.

Bell has argued in various rebalancing proposals that long distance revenues subsidize local rates. Yet, critical telecommunication writers (Babe, 1990; Mosco, 1990 a,b,c; Roman, 1990) question Bell's accounting allocation practices. Tinker, Leham and Neimark (1988:188-216) explain that, like other forms of information, accounting is a set of social practices that reflect and reinforce a dominant ideology.⁷ They argue that accounting standards and terminology produce what is considered to be the objective reporting of business activity. They maintain that when accounting applications, standards and definitions are accepted and used by the state in a rational manner their importance is heightened. Business accounting practices are legitimized by the state via taxation legislation and the acceptance by state regulators of business accounting practices audited by the private sector but not by the state. Roman (1990:96-110) questions the whole accounting premise for rate rebalancing and costing in the telecommunication industry. He argues that the CRTC has been making decisions based on accounting hypotheses used by Bell and BC Tel; hypotheses which are largely untested. The CRTC does not provide independent audits. For example, an argument can be made that Bell Canada's claim that long distance rates subsidize local service is based on a particular costing method which justifies their request for rate rebalancing. Babe (1990:121-6) reveals that Bell does not have separate accounting practices for long distance and local services. Consequently, it is difficult to identify which costs and expenses should go to which services. At best, the argument that local service is subsidized is an arbitrary assessment.

Others also question the premise that long distance rates subsidize

local telephone service. Melody (1982) claims that the reverse is true. Huber (1987) argues that allocating true common costs is arbitrary and mysterious. Hills (1989:131) suggests that telephone rates tend to be distance-related, making long distance calls more expensive than local calls, although in terms of costs to the enterprise they are cheaper. According to Oettinger (1988), current pricing policies are 'fairy tales'; 'subsidies' are accounting constructs that allow for changes in political relationships. Selecting a particular costing method helps to determine final corporate outcomes for tax purposes, shareholders return on investments, and the equitable position of business. The particular accounting methods a business chooses are not neutral, but are chosen to reflect the best position of the corporation to shareholders, the tax department, state regulators and/or stock market investors.

The Capitalist State and the CRTC: An analysis of CRTC telecommunication decisions from 1977 to 1990 is provided in Figure 2. These decisions are pro-competitive, reflecting a 'liberalized' environment for Canadian telecommunications. New telecommunication policy has been approved by the CRTC to meet the demands of large telecommunication users and the new telecommunication providers. Nonetheless, the CRTC must also mediate the conflicts and compromises between the large user groups, would-be telecommunication providers, and Bell Canada and BC Tel. In order to ensure economic survival of the larger capitalist class, the CRTC has permitted competition in some key areas, thereby denying the telecommunication power bloc their monopoly position.

By permitting more competition in mobile and cellular telephone service, the CRTC allowed more companies to provide similar services to those offered by Bell and BC Tel. The CRTC also approved Cantel (Rogers Communications) as the national cellular radio service carrier (Telecom Decisions CRTC 77-16; 84-10; 84-29; 87-13).

Considered a watershed decision, Telecom Decision CRTC 79-11, permitted CNCP to interconnect to Bell Canada's network, allowing CNCP to set up their own private business network. A second decision (Telecom Decision CRTC 81-14) allowed CNCP to interconnect with BC Tel. The Commission also permitted CNCP to set its private line service rates 5 to 10 per cent lower than Bell and BC Tel.

One exception to the pro-competitive rulings during this period

Figure 2**CRTC Pro-competition Telecommunication Decisions from 1977 to 1990****Mobile and Cellular Radio Telephone Service**

Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 77-16	Challenge v. Bell Canada
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 84-10	Mobile/cellular interconnect to Bell and BC Tel
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 84-29	Follow up to Decision 84-10
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 87-13	Cantel national cellular radio telephone service

Interconnection and Private Line Voice Service

Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 79-11	CNCP interconnection with Bell
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 81-24	CNCP interconnection with BC Tel
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 83-10	CNCP rates for private line service
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 85-19	CNCP denied competition in long distance service

Terminal Attachment

Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 80-13	Interim terminal attachment requirements Bell
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 81-19	Interim terminal attachment requirements Bell
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 81-21	Pre-hearing on terminal attachment competition
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 81-23	Standards for terminal attachment to Bell
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 82-14	Attachment of subscriber terminal equipment
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 84-11	Terminal attachment tariffs by Bell and BC Tel
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 84-12	Terminal attachment to Northwestel
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 84-13	Terminal attachment to Terra Nova
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 84-14	Terminal attachment for Telex and TWX equipment
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 85-5	Paradyne attachment for Telex & TWX equipment

Enhanced Services

Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 84-18	Regulatory policy for enhanced services
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 85-17	Identity & classification enhanced services
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 87-5	Call-Net's service only basic service
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 87-14	Call-Net's review of Decision 87-5
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 89-17	Call-Net illegal resale & sharing basic service

Resale and Sharing

Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 85-19	Some resale & sharing permitted
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 87-1	Resale & sharing of primary exchange voice
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 87-2	Resale & sharing classifications and tariffs
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 90-2	Resale & sharing Telelobe international service
Telecommunication	Decision CRTC 90-3	Resale & sharing of private line service

Source: Adapted and extended from Janisch et. al., 1987.

was the denial of CNCP's application to provide long distance public telephone services (Telecom Decision CRTC 85-19). Retreating from its former position, the CRTC was concerned that CNCP would not be able to provide universal service or offer the price discounts it forecasted in its business plan.⁸ The CRTC noted that CNCP's net income would be negative for its first four years of operation, yet the next six years would provide a rate of return of 20.6 percent. Hence, the CRTC's refusal to permit CNCP to compete in long distance telephone service appears to be primarily influenced by questions concerning the economic feasibility of CNCP's plan.

Faced with challenges to its monopoly position, Bell Canada applied to the CRTC to be given permission to liberalize its corporate rules (Telecom Decision CRTC 80-13). The subsequent decision gave the telephone subscriber the choice of purchasing or leasing their phone sets. After five years the CRTC followed this decision by extending terminal attachment to Telex and TWX equipment (Telecom Decisions CRTC 81-19, 21, 23; 82-14; 84-11, 12, 13, 14).

In the area of enhanced services, the CRTC permitted more competitors with less regulation. Only Bell's and BC Tel's enhanced services would be regulated by the CRTC. Bell and BC Tel had to make sure there would be no cross subsidization from their phone monopolies to lower their enhanced service rates. The CRTC held both carriers accountable to make sure they would not participate in unfair competition practices. Finally, the Commission established a dispute resolution mechanism placing onus on the carrier to justify a denial of the resale and sharing of enhanced services to would-be providers (Telecom Decisions CRTC 84-18; 85-17; 87-5, 14; 89-17).

The rulings reached by the CRTC on enhanced services helped to intensify disputes throughout the 1980s. Bell and CNCP denied the resale of enhanced services to Call-Net Communications Ltd. Accepting Bell's argument, the CRTC concluded that except for voice mail and the routing of calls, all other Call-Net services were not enhanced but basic services (Telecom Decision CRTC 87-5). Accordingly, the CRTC directed both Bell and CNCP to stop supplying Call-Net with their MTS/WATS facilities.

Call-Net responded by having Decision 87-5 reviewed. In Telecom Decision CRTC 87-14 Call-Net claimed that the CRTC had made a number of errors. The CRTC's investigation of its decision found that no errors had been made. Call-Net applied directly to the

government and through an Order-in-Council the government permitted Call-Net to extend its access to Bell and CNCP for almost one year.

The Order-in-Council overruled the CRTC decision, giving Call-Net time to restructure its business operations to conform with the Commission's ruling in Decision 87-5. In 1988 (Telecom Decision CRTC 88-11) Call-Net reapplied to the CRTC to examine its new enhanced services, CDAR. The Commission ruled that except for incoming call identification and voice recording storage and retrieval, all other CDAR services were basic and not enhanced services. Moreover, Call-Net's wide area telephone services (WATS) did not meet the definition for enhanced services (Telecom Decisions CRTC 84-18; 87-2, 5; 88-11).

These events were repeated as Call-Net tried to organize its customers into sharing groups so that private lines could be used jointly. The CRTC considered this reorganization an illegal way to re-sell enhanced services (Telecom Letter Decision 88-9). However, a second Order-in-Council extended Call-Net's cut-off from Bell and CNCP. These disputes were resolved when the CRTC relaxed its rules governing the resale and sharing of private network services (Telecom Decision CRTC 90-3).

Until Telecom Decision CRTC 85-19, federally regulated carriers were prohibited from re-selling and sharing their services, except via a special agreement approved by the CRTC.⁹ The CRTC concluded that resale and sharing would benefit through more competition. Non-regulated suppliers would not be regulated. The rationale offered by the Commission was that the new competitors would rely on competitive pricing. In other words, the environment would be governed by market forces rather than government regulation. Meanwhile, the resale and sharing services offered by Bell and BC Tel would continue to be regulated.

The Subordinate Class: Telecommunication Trade Unions: In a commissioned study (Mosco and Zureik, 1987), the Communication, Energy and Paper Workers Union of Canada (CEP), formerly the Communication and Electrical Workers of Canada (CEWC), note that technological modernization in the telecommunication industry leads to job losses, deskilling, the computerized monitoring of work performance, and increases in part-time and contract work. Aside from these issues, the CEP has also been active in sharing information with the Canada

public on the effects of deregulation and long distance competition. Part of their campaign in 1985 to defeat CNCP's bid to compete in long distance services involved the distribution of petitions and pamphlets, the creation of toll free phone information, and the launching of a national media campaign. Along with the Telecommunication Workers Union (TWU) and other civil society organizations, the CEP was successful in preventing CNCP from competing in long distance services (Telecom Decision CRTC 85-19). More recently, the CEP has spoken out against similar applications filed by Unitel and BCRL (CEWC, 1989).

The CEP supports a single regulated monopoly network, arguing that the creation of more long distance networks would involve an expensive capital outlay that would result in substantial telephone rate increases. The CEP also supports a single future broadband network. The CEP favours a single network because it would help create and protect jobs. It is also felt that it would be easier to set policy over one network. Ironically, this leaves the CEP in a contradictory position, supporting similar policies to those of Bell.

The Telecommunication Workers Union (TWU), like the CEP, has been actively involved in the telecommunication policy process. The TWU has made policy recommendations to the Department of Communications and the CRTC (Schniad, 1990). They argue that competition in long distance voice and data services would not be in the public interest, but would only benefit the business community. Instead, the union supports a state-of-the-art unitary network governed by strict regulatory requirements.

Civil Society Groups and Organizations:

(i) First Nations Organizations. Koebberling (1990:22) notes that as early as 1970 the Inuit presented their telecommunication needs to the Department of Communications. The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) lobbied for reliable and inexpensive interactive services suitable for the harsh conditions of the Arctic. Often the whole Inuit community participated and spoke at hearings (Telecom Decision CRTC 77-16). Along with complaints about a system that did not work for up to three or four weeks at a time, the ITC expressed concerns with disconnections that resulted because bills were received late or written only in English.

Service problems were resolved in the late 1970s, but this was followed in the 1980s by fewer specialty services and increased rates. McNulty (1980:1-15) argues that Northern telecommunication expansion

and control was geared to meet the needs not of the Inuit, but particular Northern development projects (for example, mining exploration), the major telephone companies, and the Federal government.

The ITC challenged Bell's rates at a number of hearings, arguing that remote northern areas should have specialized flat rates and be able to take advantage of the special discount packages offered to southern subscribers. The CRTC rejected the ITC's recommendation for a 24 hour flat rate (Koeberling, 1990:25). However, the Inuit are not only interested in the economic advantage of telecommunication services but, more importantly, in the capabilities for education, health and transportation as well as social and cultural applications.

(ii) Disabled People's Groups. The Canadian Hearing Society and the Canadian Coordinating Council on Deafness have participated in a number of CRTC hearings on rate rebalancing, resale and sharing, and interconnection. Both organizations urged the CRTC to introduce technical standards to ensure that all telephones are compatible with a hearing aid device called a *telecoil can*. BC Tel, the Canadian Manufacturers Association and the Canadian Business Manufacturers Association argued that it would cost too much (\$10 per telephone) to convert single line phones. The CRTC ruled that Canada is committed to disabled groups and that telephone devices for the hearing impaired should be as low as possible. Nonetheless, the CRTC did not change the standards rule for hearing aid compatibility (Telecom Decision CRTC 82-14).

It was only after further standards hearings and additional participation by other disabled organizations such as the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped and the British Columbia Old Age Pensioners Organization, that the CRTC approved the changes for telephone sets for federally regulated carriers in 1987 (Telecom Decision CRTC 87-1).

(iii) Anti Poverty Groups and Public Interest Advocacy Organizations. The National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO) has and continues to participate in the telecommunication policy process. NAPO was an active participant in the liberalization of terminal attachment hearing and in CNCP's long distance bid in 1985. Permitting competition in telecommunication services, according to NAPO, benefits business users and the new telecommunication providers at the expense of ordinary Canadian telephone subscribers.

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIA), a non-public law

organization, represents various civil groups before regulatory tribunals, the courts, and legislative committees. Past hearing involvement includes those concerning interim terminal attachment, rate rebalancing (Telecom Decisions CRTC 85-19, 88-4), and the recent hearing on competition in long distance telephone service (CRTC Telecom Public Notice 1990-73). PIA agreed with the Federal Provincial Territorial Task Force (1988) that if competition is permitted and long distance rates are reduced, economic supply and demand theory predicts that long distance calling would increase, consequently increasing long distance revenues. Hence, PIA argues that local rates would not have to increase. PIA also notes that Bell and BC Tel's modernization programs are subsidized by residential subscribers, even though most of the programs only benefit the business subscribers (Todd, 1990:iii-iv).

(iv) Senior Citizen Groups and Coalitions. Various senior citizen coalitions, such as the British Columbia Old Age Pensioners' Organization (BCOAP) have taken part in a number of hearings. BCOAP's position in rate rebalancing and long distance competition is that if local phone rates increase, numerous seniors on fixed incomes would be adversely affected. Seniors consider telephone services to be a necessity for emergency and social use. Such groups hold the view that it is the telephone system's social aspect which increases its service value to all subscribers. If competition is permitted in long distance service and local rates go up, a number of subscribers would drop off the system.

It is interesting to note that in 1985 (Telecom Decision CRTC 85-19) Bell estimated that 160,000 subscribers, or 400,000 individuals, would drop of the system if rates were rebalanced. Similarly, BC Tel forecasted that 30,000 of its subscribers would have to leave the network and 70 percent of its population would pay higher prices. In the recent long distance competition hearing Bell, BC Tel, Unitel and BCRL as well as the large telecommunication user groups all supported 'targeted subsidies' to alleviate the drop-off of subscribers.

Targeted subsidies, however, is simply another name for telephone welfare programs. Mosco (1991:4), in evidence presented before the CRTC on long distance competition, emphasizes that there are important lessons to be learned from the American experience with telephone welfare programs:

By 1990, 49 states, the District of Columbia, and the federal government operated a wide range of programs to subsidize the cost of telephone installation.

Admittedly the names of these programs avoid identification with traditional social assistance. Link-Up America, which subsidizes installation, and Lifeline, which provides service discounts have replaced earlier reference to phone stamps.

Included in these programs are not only federal subsidies, but state run programs each with varying criteria for welfare eligibility, including income verification tests that are often administered by the phone companies. Moreover, the welfare programs have failed to reach the majority of the eligible subscribers.¹⁰

(v) Consumers Association of Canada. The only organization which claims to represent all Canadian residential telephone subscribers, the Consumers Association of Canada (CAC), occupies a shifting ideological position which is increasingly difficult to identify. In numerous hearings, the CAC supported competition on behalf of business users (see the terminal attachment Decisions 80-13, 82-14, and enhanced services Decision 84-10, etc.), but often ignored the interests of residential subscribers.

The CAC's (1991) evidence in the 1990-91 long distance competition hearings recommends that the Consumer Price Index would be a good measure of affordability if applied to telephone bills. According to the CAC, residential subscribers can afford to pay more for their services.¹¹ Further, the CAC (1991:24) emphasizes the importance of developing economic and technical criteria for meeting the needs of medium and small business. What is noteworthy about the CAC is that their position is unlike that presented by American consumer organizations during AT&T hearings; the CAC has virtually abandoned the non-business subscriber. This position is a good example of how a group within the subordinate class can become fractionalized and serve the interest of the power bloc.

Conclusion

Telecommunication services have been and continue to be created to meet the demands of large users and the business sector. The CRTC has contributed to the process by permitting more competition and liberalizing telecommunication policy. This shift has meant that many business services are no longer placed under public supervision or regulation.

Conversely, the submissions offered by unions, anti-poverty organizations, the hearing impaired, seniors organizations, and native peoples reveal that recent policy shifts come at the expense of public interest and universality. In Canada, the concept of universality is increasingly approached from an economic and/or technical point of view by the telecommunication industry and the CRTC. Universal service simply means the ability to reach more consumers. However, as Garnham (1989:125) explains, this approach is limiting because it regards telecommunication service solely as an economic good to be consumed like any other commodity. Hence, the distribution of telecommunication welfare becomes an important policy consideration for suppliers, the state, unions and various civil society groups and organizations. Policy objectives are translated into reasonable costs (affordability) for consumers, ignoring the vital issue of the needs of citizens.

'Targeted subsidies' are also part of the current discourse of telecommunication policy liberalization. This discourse is an attempt to camouflage the effects of telecommunication competition on low and fixed income subscribers, but it does not address subscribers who value telephony for its social/cultural usefulness. The shift away from public service also increases the problems of regional disparity, the differences between northern and southern, urban and rural subscribers.

Until the late 1940s telephone service in Canada discriminated against many Canadians on a class basis. Service was considered to be a business tool or a luxury (Mosco and Pike, 1986). The evidence presented in this analysis suggests that a shift to liberal policies is eroding the social principles associated with public policy, generating a two tiered system; one for basic services and one for privileged and business users. In the process, the telephone could be transformed back into the luxury item it was fifty years ago.

An alternative to a two tiered telecommunication system is a telecommunication environment influenced and guided by social regulation. Mosco (1990c:30-32) offers important suggestions for social regulation, breaking it into short term and long term goals and objectives. In the short run, a commitment to universality requires a stronger focus on the social regulation of the telecommunication industry. This would mean stronger regulation of accounting, pricing and investment practices of all the carriers, including the Telecommunication Canada consortium, Unitel, BC Rail/Lightel, and Call-Net. Stronger social regulation also means that issues with significant social implications must receive

heightened attention. This includes informing and educating the public about the social, cultural, and economic implications of new services.

In the long term, it is necessary to examine the values, network types, forms of governance, and pricing mechanisms that can frame another vision of a transformed telecommunication system. What this means is that rather than building on a market frame-work, as workers and citizens we need to determine the real communication and information needs of people. We need to begin with a broader commitment to universality; one which includes the fundamental right of access to the production, distribution and use of information services in general. Further, the fundamental right to universal access to telecommunication networks needs to include a wide range of voice, information, and signalling services. Longer range values involve developing a strong and democratic policy process which defines issues for the policy agenda by soliciting and organizing public participation in policy decision making and implementation.

Postscript

Since this research was conducted, significant developments have occurred which warrant further comment. In 1992, the CRTC permitted competition in long distance services, breaking up the monopoly held by Bell Canada and BC Tel. Although new long distance telephone service suppliers such as Unitel and BC Rail/Lightel will be able to compete with Telecommunication Canada members, the process is far from over and the telecommunication arena continues to change.

Bell Canada has unsuccessfully contested the CRTC ruling. More recently, Bell has applied to the CRTC to increase its residential and business local rates. These rate increases range from 10 to 65 per cent. Bell maintains these increases are necessary so that it can now compete effectively in Canadian telecommunications. Call-Net, a partner with BC Rail/Lightel, is in the process of acquiring other telecommunication companies as it strengthens its position through consolidation to compete in the public long distance market. Similarly, significant changes are occurring at Unitel which recently sold a 20 per cent share of its corporation to AT&T. This is the first step in breaking a hundred-year tradition in which decision-making and control of the telecommunications industry was overseen by the Canadian public.

Notes

1. Babe (1990:90) explains that in 1880 Bell Telephone Company of Canada was given a charter to incorporate a national company. The charter was a de facto monopoly for early telecommunicationmunications. Bell's charter permitted the company to manufacture and develop a telephone system with a guarantee from the federal government that there would be no interference from other competitors. From 1880 until 1906 Bell's "monopolistic price gouging, over predatory business practices, and over service deprivation in rural areas" (Babe, 1990:90) led to a public outcry. Numerous petitions were sent to the government demanding that the company be nationalized. The federal government responded to public pressure by subjecting Bell to a very loose form of regulation in 1906 by a state agency known as the Board of Railway Commissioners for Canada. Their mandate was extremely vague, dealing only with the issue of rates; their only criteria was that rates be just, reasonable and applied to all people at the same rate. In 1976 federal telecommunication regulation was assigned to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission.

2. CNCP is the monopoly producer of telegraph services such as teletex and telex. The organization also provides a wide range of private telephone services. More recently CNCP offers private line voice, video, facsimile and data services. It is also the exclusive supplier of Canada's broad band data services (Datapro, 1989).

3. Private branch exchanges (PBX) are terminal and switching devices. When located on the customer's premises, they are called terminals but when they are provided by a telephone company on its premises, they are refereed to as centrex exchanges (Babe, 1990:28).

4. The term 'by-pass' refers to the capability of the new communication technology and the new telecommunication networks to redirect (by computer or networks) telecommunication traffic to other networks.

5. Until the Supreme Court decision of August 14, 1989, telecommunication regulation and policy was split between federal, provincial and a few municipal governments. The federal regulator, the CRTC, regulated the private telecommunication providers, Bell Canada and BC Tel. Provincial governments were responsible for regulating the public telecommunication sector. A few municipalities such as Edmonton own, operate and regulate their own telecommunication systems.

6. As part of this research project a written request was made to the CCC for a list of its members. Gloria Schpales, Mr. Richardson's executive assistant, informed this researcher on July 13, 1990 that the CCC was "unable to send a list of its members."

7. In Canada, the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accounts (CICA), the National body of Chartered Accounts, is responsible for accounting and auditing standards. Its recommendations are used by public accountants, small businesses, commerce and industry, governments, finance, etc., are published in the *CICA Handbook* (Smith et. al., 1978). The accounting profession, business and the state accept the legality and legitimacy of these practices. The critique of accounting methods and practices offered in this paper is an attempt to show that within a class analysis accounting practices are not neutral. It is common practice, for example, for trade unions, when negotiating collective agreements with business, to scrutinize the audited annual corporate reports for various legal ways to defer taxation through depreciation, reserved funds, shareholder's equity, contingency funds, etc.

8. CNCP's application proposed that it would obtain a market share of MTS/WATS service of approximately eight per cent over 10 years, make contribution payments equal to 11.5 cents per minute, and offer prices 20 to 30 per cent below the existing telephone rates. The CRTC noted that in order to make CNCP's MTS/WATS services profitable, a large discount would be required from Bell and BC Tel. The Commission was concerned that requesting such a discount would result in higher local rates (Telecom Decision CRTC 85-19 and Interrogatory CNCP (CRTC) 05 October 84-1302).

10. As of 1990 in the United States only 3.06 per cent of eligible link-up subscribers have enrolled in the program and 31.8 per cent of life-line eligible subscribers have signed up in 48 states (Mosco, 1991:4).

11. After applying the Consumer Price Index to telephone bills from 1986 to 1990, the CAC argues that bills have declined by 7.9 per cent, whereas other residential bills increased by 16.0 per cent.

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TAKING 'FREEDOM OF THE PRESS' SERIOUSLY: CRITICAL MEDIA SOCIOLOGY AND THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY¹

*David C. Robinson
Carleton University*

Media Sociology and the 'Problem' of Democracy

The free press is the omnipresent open eye of the spirit of the people, the embodied confidence of a people in itself, the articulate bond that ties the individual to the state and the world, the incorporated culture which transfigures material struggles into intellectual struggles and realizes its raw material shape. It is the ruthless confession of a people to itself, and it is well known that the power of confession is redeeming. The free press is the intellectual mirror in which a people sees itself, and self-viewing is the first condition of wisdom.

Karl Marx²

Freedom of the press is a sham as long as the best printing plants and huge stocks of paper are in the hands of capitalists.

V.I. Lenin³

By proposing that 'freedom of the press' needs to be taken seriously, I want to suggest that many media sociologists --- and particularly those working within critical and Marxist traditions --- can be charged with failing to think through, in any sustained manner, the democratic claims of liberal media theory. As Lenin's polemical comments reveal, there has been an all too common tendency to sweep aside liberal theories of 'freedom of the press' without adequately addressing the substance of such claims. Consequently, critical media sociology has been crippled by its inability to elaborate a strategy for the development of a socialist and democratic press. Failing to take freedom of the press seriously raises a fundamental question: is the current theoretical framework of media studies capable of confronting the problem of how to construct a democratic press?

Such a question has been made all the more pertinent given the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. The failure of 'actually existing' socialism and the virtual overnight monopolization of press markets in those nations has lent added force to voices in the West advocating neo-liberal reforms of the public media. Centuries old arguments defining 'freedom of the press' solely in terms of private

competition have made a successful return. Neo-liberals have launched a series of attacks against state regulation and public broadcasting by arguing that unfettered market competition is the *key* condition of media freedom: it keeps prices low, it forces suppliers to take risks, it guarantees access to the marketplace of ideas, and it allows consumers to decide for themselves what products will be produced (see Owen 1975:26-27).

Given the recent erosion of many public channels of communication and their subsequent domination by market forces, there is a pressing need to re-examine debates surrounding 'freedom of the press'. In this paper, I will argue that while critical studies of news production --- radical elite theory, organizational studies, and the Marxist political economy tradition --- can provide one with the conceptual tools required to successfully *deconstruct* neo-liberal claims, they fail to arm one with the necessary instruments to *reconstruct* a practical alternative to existing patterns of news production. Given the failure and abuses of state-administered socialism, socialists need to take 'freedom of the press' seriously, to radically reconsider what Marx recognized as the positive claims of liberal free press theory. To this end, I propose to advance the research project begun by Marxist critiques of news production by wedding them to a tradition of democratic thought in order to produce a third position --- a radical democratic theory. A radical democratic theory of news production will emphasize that the unfettered competition of media producers ultimately restricts freedom by generating barriers to entry, restricting diversity, and converting *public* information into *private* commodities. However, it will depart from the critical paradigm of media studies by questioning its monolithic portrait of the media and by challenging its traditional reliance upon state-centred reform. Drawing principally upon the democratic theory of Habermas, I will argue that the news media need to be reconstructed as a participatory and decentralized public sphere in which private citizens can gather to debate issues of public concern, monitor state authority, and expose private power (Habermas, 1979:198).

The Claims of Liberal Media Theory

Historically, the origins of liberal media theory in the West can be traced to the early struggles waged by the ascending bourgeoisie against the censoring authority of absolutist states. The 18th Century formation of

a press critical of government and the ruling aristocracy already contained the seeds of what has come to be its widely accepted role in democratic society --- as a watchdog on the affairs of government and as an independent organ of public debate (Mill, 1972:78-79).

It was argued by many early reformers that both the independence of the press from the state and its role as a facilitator of public discussion could best be achieved by subjecting it to the impersonal and self-regulating forces of market competition. Indeed, the absence of any extra-economic agency in the transactions that took place in the 'marketplace of ideas' guaranteed that the press would be free from any kind of state coercion. Further, the economic power of each individual consumer and producer, it was alleged, was subordinate to anonymous laws of exchange; this would preclude one individual from unduly influencing the market and restricting the free and open flow of public communications (Habermas, 1989:79; Wuliger, 1991:153). Market competition would guarantee that decentralized individual decision-making involving only the calculus of personal gain would decide what messages would be produced and what messages would survive in the open market (Owen, 1975:26-27).

In rallying against the very real abuses of state censorship, however, market liberals were subsequently blinded to the possibility that non-state power structures could intervene in the process of public debate, thus limiting access to the market (Curran, 1991:29, Garnham, 1990:17-18). The possibility of the *self-censorship* of media producers, for example, was occluded.⁴ Furthermore, while it is assumed that democratic access is unproblematic under competitive conditions, history has revealed that unfettered market competition tends to raise production costs, constructing a formidable barrier to potential producers (Keane, 1989:39). As for the cost of entry as a consumer, and the discrimination against those with low incomes, market liberals are silent.

While more recently developed neo-liberal media theories put a contemporary inflection on the issue of freedom of the press by attacking modern public service broadcasting and state regulation, they nevertheless share the limitations of their predecessors. If the issue is whether or not the laws of the market can ensure democratic access to the channels of public communication, then both the liberal and neo-liberal defense of unfettered competition remain unconvincing. While neo-liberals argue that the market is efficient and promotes diversity, free competition has only eroded competition, discouraging potential producers, and

encouraging mergers and takeovers that have culminated in the rise of multinational media conglomerates (Bagdikian, 1985, 1990; Curran, 1977; Keane, 1990; Murdock, 1982, 1990; Schiller, 1989). As further evidence that the market fails to encourage competition, one need only examine the old Soviet bloc states in which state monopolies have been quickly replaced by private monopolies (Sparks, 1992).

The general weakness of market liberal approaches, therefore, has been their failure to conceptualize how market pressures restrict access to the media and undermine the spirit of universality implicit within the claims of 'freedom of the press'. In reacting so strongly against the threat of state power, liberal media theories tend to mask over those non-state power structures (e.g. capitalism, patriarchy) that can just as easily censor public expression. Consequently, this lacunae represents the point of entry for critical studies of news production.

Radical Elite Theory: Economic Power and the Management of News

For radical elite theorists, democratic access to the media is undermined by the unequal power relations that permeate a class-divided society. The control and ownership of the media by wealthy owners from the privileged class means that editorial policy will be dictated by individuals "whose ideological dispositions run from soundly conservative to utterly reactionary," (Miliband, 1973:204). Ownership grants media elites the power to manufacture and disseminate class propaganda; they can function as "mind managers" (Schiller, 1973) and generate ideologies themselves, or they can act as "gatekeepers", selecting and screening ideas and opinions (Clement, 1975:282). Through the appointment of personnel, and the establishment of specific editorial policies, the media elite manage the production of news in ways that favour dominant class interests (Bagdikian, 1985:104-106).

This understanding of the 'gatekeeper' significantly alters and radicalizes earlier definitions of the term. Whereas White's (1950:386) classic study concluded that what was accepted or rejected by one news gatekeeper (a wire editor) was highly *subjective*, radical elite theories propose that the process of news selection and rejection is more a function of the gatekeeper's position within the *objective* conditions of a class structured society.

For example, Clement's detailed survey of the bibliographic data of the executives and directors of Canada's largest media conglomerates

reveals that members of this group overwhelmingly come from privileged backgrounds and have close links with other economic elites. Because media elites are inextricably tied into such power relations, Clement concludes that they are favourable to capitalist ideology and manage the flow of news by filtering out alternative views and opinions: "The mass media in Canada are class institutions run by, for and in the interest of the upper class" (1975:341). Against the backcloth of economic power, "the free expression of ideas and opinions *mainly* means the free expression of ideas and opinions which are helpful to the prevailing system of power and privilege" (Miliband, 1973: 197).

The suggestion that owners directly influence the editorial content of the news media has been widely debated and criticized. In his work, Black (1982:114) argues that direct editorial intervention is rare. Indeed, the ideas and opinions of owners often take a back seat to the financial imperatives of economic survival (Hartley, 1982:48). Hackett (1986:144), Schudson (1989), and Schlesinger et. al. (1983:163) point out that there is a relative diversity of opinion within the media and messages that are seemingly in contrast to dominant ideological positions do appear. While radical elite theorists may not deny this, they nevertheless run the risk of overstating the homogeneity of dominant interests and the internal consistency of dominant discourses (Curran, 1991:36).

Further, there is a tendency to overplay the extent of ideological domination of subordinate classes; in the radical elite model, the media audience is often portrayed as a passive and malleable mass open to direct ideological indoctrination. However, this tends to ignore how readers and spectators make meaning, how they 'decode' the news (Schlesinger, 1989:301; Hackett, 1986:146; Morley, 1980; Hall, 1980).

Finally, Hall et. al. (1978) suggest that, contrary to radical elite assumptions, journalists are not subjected to overt managerial control. Rather, news workers maintain a measure of 'relative autonomy', allowing them to shape a news story in ways that might not please upper management. Hence, the ideological role of the media "cannot be simply attributed...to the fact that the media are in large part capitalist-owned..., since this would be to ignore the day-to-day 'relative' autonomy of the journalist and news producers from direct economic control" (1978: 57).

Radical elite theories have thus received a number of potentially disabling blows. However, in many instances the critique of this work tends to bend the stick too far in the other direction, overplaying the 'relative autonomy' of journalists and the resistant readings of audiences.

In such cases, the crucial issue of the relationship between ownership, access, and news content is simply skirted. Yet, the rise of a new generation of interventionist owners such as Rupert Murdoch, Conrad Black, and the late Robert Maxwell, reveals that media elites can exercise some degree of authority over their respective organizations. When Murdoch purchased the *Sunday Times* in 1981, for example, he placed pressure on senior editors to move the politics of the paper to the right. Faced with such intrusive management, more than one hundred 'relatively autonomous' journalists either left the newspaper in protest or were fired (Curran, 1990:132). While the *Sunday Times* example may be an extreme case, it does point to the fact that media elites can and in some cases do exert powerful pressures on the news production process. Radical elite theorists, therefore, do not necessarily deny that journalists enjoy a degree of professional autonomy, but they argue that *on balance* the ideological interests of those who own and manage the media are served. Even if radical elite theorists tend to overstate the magnitude and frequency of managerial intervention and ideological control, they are nevertheless correct to emphasize that the right of ownership carries with it a significant degree of power to shape the nature of public discourse.

The Study of News Organizations: The Social Construction of Reality

Radical elite theories attempt to discount the liberal claim that market competition guarantees a diverse and democratic flow of news and information by pointing to the unequal distribution of power within a class-based society. Organizational studies of the news media, on the other hand, challenge liberal media theory by shifting the focus of analysis away from elite manipulation of the news and toward the institutional settings and work practices of the journalists who selectively define, determine, and shape the world's events (Molotch and Lester, 1974; Tuchman, 1978: 179). Questions of access to the media and of the relationship between media production and ideological reproduction are reconceptualized, not as a process of direct intervention, but as a consequence of the routine tasks of news production itself (Chibnall, 1977; Clarke, 1987; Ericson et. al., 1987; Schlesinger, 1977). However, this theoretical advance is accomplished with an added risk. By focusing the analysis upon the internal workings of media institutions, there is the danger of underplaying the broader social-economic context within which news practices are undertaken (Bruck, 1981:13).

Organizational studies, on the whole, conclude that the primary factor affecting who and what will be given access to the media stems from the institutional needs of the media industry. For example, Tuchman's (1978: 21) study of the seemingly chaotic newsroom environment concludes that time and budgetary constraints force journalists to cast a 'news net' over the social world. How far the net is flung, when it is flung, and how tight the mesh is woven will determine which events and issues will be covered. Because of the constant pressure of meeting deadlines and budgets, journalists are encouraged to cast their net in the direction of 'legitimate' institutions and official sources who conduct 'routinized events' such as organized press conferences and public speeches (Tuchman, 1978:93-95; Epstein, 1973:32). Fishman (1978, 1980), Gans (1979: 284), and Molotch and Lester (1974:107) conclude that this dependency upon institutional sources leads journalists to view the world as bureaucratically structured, a process reflected in the division of labour into institutional 'news beats' (e.g. city hall, police, courts). Such a dependency grants privileged access to social elites and means that anything that is outside or in violation of bureaucratic procedures is a 'non-event' (Fishman, 1980:84). Consequently, there is the danger that bureaucratic elites can manage the media for their own institutional needs (Ericson et. al., 1989; Schlesinger, 1990).

Hence, the implication of this research is that groups and social movements that espouse oppositional politics are forced to compete for media attention with well established and well financed bureaucracies. In order to enter the public sphere, therefore, counter-hegemonic groups are tacitly encouraged to alter their organizational structure to conform to the bureaucratic standards demanded by news gatherers (Gitlin, 1980:242-244). As a result, social movements are in danger of being absorbed by or, alternatively, expelled from the dominant knowledge structure of society.

Furthermore, such constraints as time, technology, and money help determine not just what gets reported, but also how it is reported and framed. As Tuchman (1972:662) argues, the very nature of 'objective' and 'balanced' reporting results from journalists' attempts to minimize risks imposed by deadlines, libel suits, and supervisors' reprimands. The professional code of objectivity, in turn, limits access to the media in two ways. First, 'impartial' and 'balanced' reporting requires journalists to juxtapose contrasting views and conclude that the truth lies somewhere

in the middle (Epstein, 1973:67, 168-169). However, this discourse of *consensus* tends to mask over the fundamental *divisions* within the social world (Clarke, 1987:628). Hence, counter-hegemonic social actors who want to publicly question the nature of this consensus may find their arguments muted by the professional mandate to present the news in a balanced and consensual form. Second, 'objectivity' restricts access by allowing media organizations to secure and maintain their monopoly positions (Soloski, 1989:214). If the news were presented in an overtly political manner, then the market would be ripe for competition. By reporting the news objectively, however, reader loyalty is not made a function of the ideological stance of the newspaper.

Despite their general strengths in detailing the institutional and professional practices that limit democratic access to the news media, one problem nevertheless plagues many of these studies, namely a kind of 'organizational determinism'. For example, while Epstein (1973) and Tuchman (1972, 1978) provide a detailed and convincing list of the economic and political constraints that affect the production of news, there is little attempt to trace these factors to their origins. The strongest studies in this tradition are those that stress that the organizational needs of media industries do not spring up spontaneously and independently, but are themselves determined and conditioned by a larger frame of analysis --- the sets of social relations that figure in capitalist society and that extend through and shape the media organization in the first instance (Clarke, 1987:39-40; Schlesinger, 1977). While time, technology, money, and professional codes of journalism undoubtedly exert a considerable influence upon the production of news, it is important to recognize another level of pressures and limits, those derived from market relations.

The Marxist Political Economy Tradition: The Market as Censor

Radical political economists, by focusing upon the structural logic of capitalist production, have raised three interrelated objections to the universalist claims of liberal media theory: 1) the logic of competition fosters the growth of monopolies, raising costs and discouraging potential producers; 2) as an advertising driven industry, only those media that can deliver attractive audiences to advertisers will survive and, thus, not all citizens will be served by the media; and 3) advertising-financing encourages a separation between information-rich and information-poor media products that exacerbates class differences. Hence, unlike radical

elite theories which tend to focus their analysis on *who* controls the media, the neo-Marxist political economic tradition concentrates more on *how* the underlying forces of a capitalist economic system structure both the operations and outputs of media organizations (Murdock, 1980:38; Murdock, 1982:124; Garnham, 1986b).⁵

Historically, the promise of universal access to the marketplace of ideas has been circumvented by the ever increasing concentration of media ownership which has drastically reduced the number of outlets necessary for the dissemination of a diverse set of views and opinions (Royal Commission on Newspapers, 1981:119-121). More recently, the success of neo-liberal initiatives in persuading governments to privatize public communication networks and to deregulate other parts of the industry have only exacerbated the trend toward greater monopolization and conglomeration. During the late 1980s, for example, a wave of corporate deals culminated in GE's acquisition of NBC, Sony's takeover of CBS, and the merger of Time Inc. and Warner Brothers (Murdock, 1990:1; Kellner, 1990:66).

This feature of the communications industries, according to neo-Marxist political economists, is not simply indicative of a 'failure' in the market, as liberals would have it (see Owen, 1975:27). Rather, it is endemic to the competitive market system itself. There is a structural tendency embedded within marketplace competition that drives producers to lower their operating costs. One of the principle ways in which this is accomplished is through a shift to greater economies of scale in production. However, this strategy raises the cost of entry to the market and discourages potential producers (Keane, 1991:80; Curran 1977, 1978; Schiller, 1989:36).⁶ In short, there appears to be a structural contradiction between freedom of expression and unlimited freedom of the market. It is thus doubtful that a communications system dominated by private ownership and market competition can secure the diversity of news and debate required for the development of an informed citizenry and an effective democratic process (Murdock, 1990:4; Picard, 1985:132-133).

Beyond the issues of media concentration and corporate power, political economists stress that an analysis of the specific nature of commodity production within the media industry reveals that dependency upon advertising revenue factors in a whole complex set of pressures which shape the production of news. Smythe's work suggests that the real commodity produced by the news media is not a television program

or a newspaper item, but an audience that is sold to advertisers (1977, 1981:16, 23-39). The non-advertising content of the media is a 'free lunch' designed to attract specific audiences so that advertisers may be able to reach them with their messages. The 'free lunch' precludes the existence of oppositional voices in the media since advertisers demand content that will "cultivate a mood conducive to favorable reaction to the advertisers' explicit and implicit messages," (1981:38). The media act as a 'hegemonic filter', screening in the values of the capitalist system and screening out unwanted ideas, not by way of an elite gatekeeper, but as a function of the imperatives of commodity production --- the need to produce audiences to sell to advertisers.

While Smythe's argument has sparked a great deal of controversy,⁷ it nevertheless raises a number of key questions about how the economic logic of news production undermines the principle of democratic access. That is, one of the consequences of the media's dependency upon advertising revenue is that those products that cannot gather audiences that advertisers find attractive will simply not survive. The demise of the radical working class press in Britain, for example, has been directly attributed to the inability of such newspapers to lower cover prices by increasing advertising space (Curran, 1977, 1979, 1980). Advertisers, in their quest to reach 'up-market' audiences, have historically exerted a powerful pressure on the radical press to redefine its target audience and moderate its editorial stance (Curran, 1977:219; Schudson, 1978:25). Even today, wary of losing audiences and advertising revenue, the news media come to occupy a kind of ideological 'middle-ground' and package their 'free lunch' accordingly (Gruneau and Hackett, 1990:291). In the process, significant social interests are simply not represented.

Advertising pressure is also exacerbating recent trends toward market segmentation that are generating a 'two-tiered' press system. In many Western nations, markets are sharply divided between a popular tabloid press that is comprised primarily of 'light' entertainment stories, and an elite quality press that features 'serious' matters of finance and politics (Curran et. al., 1980; Ericson et. al., 1991:42; Sparks, 1988, 1991, 1992). In order to understand this phenomenon, one must keep in mind that an advertising-financed press system channels marketing strategies in two possible directions, toward capturing a large and heterogeneous audience, or a small but wealthy audience that advertisers find highly attractive. For example, the British tabloid *The Sun* charges advertisers

\$US 52,000 to reach an audience of 10,220,000. In order to reach the 694,000 readers of *The Financial Times*, however, advertisers are willing to pay \$US 45,600 (Sparks, 1992: 39). Proportionally, advertisers are prepared to invest far more to reach the educated and wealthy readers of *The Financial Times*; this suggests that elite social groups are 'over-represented' in the media market. Therefore, given that papers with smaller circulations and elite readers can earn advertising revenue very close to those with large mass audiences, no real incentives exist for the quality press to extend its readership beyond its small market.

The market for news and information, as driven by the demands of advertisers, is thus becoming highly fragmented and is further widening the gap between those who are 'information-rich' and those who are 'information-poor'. The new 'quality' press, with the majority of its space devoted to public policy issues, is highly inaccessible. Its textual density and significantly higher cover price effectively exclude those consumers who lack the educational, cultural, and financial capital necessary to digest the material.⁸ Contrary to liberal press theory, marketplace competition cannot live up to its claims of universal access. Structural imperatives of private competition and advertiser-financing necessarily create a situation in which access for both producers and consumers of information is restricted.

A 'Post-Bourgeois' Public Sphere: A Radical Democratic Response

The lamentable but inevitable conclusion that must be drawn from research over the past couple of decades is that the communications media have failed democracy.
Peter Golding (1990:100)

From the review of the literature, it is clear that a number of institutional factors continue to militate against the full realization of 'freedom of the press'. The private ownership and growing concentration of the media industries are granting more power to corporations and elites while public channels of communication are steadily weakened (Melody, 1990; Schiller, 1989). Market imperatives that have conditioned particular organizational practices have led journalists to adopt news gathering routines and professional ideologies that work against the dissemination of oppositional ideas and opinions. Further, the structural logic of a competitive market system leads to increased costs of entry and monopolization, thus reducing diversity. As the news media have come

to rely more and more upon advertising, popular radical views have been forced out of the market. Finally, advertising imperatives have led to a class-based segmentation of the press which is further accelerating the gap between the information-rich and the information-poor, a phenomenon that is occurring throughout the communications industry (Murdock and Golding, 1989). Taken together, these arguments suggest that there is good reason to be concerned about 'freedom of the press' today.

However, the great limitation of the critical work surveyed above is the inability to investigate the relationship between the media and democracy beyond the critique of existing models of private ownership. In many cases, the media is constructed as a giant monolith of the ruling class or as a rigid ideological state apparatus impervious to reform of any kind short of a revolutionary transformation of society. In other work, a faith in state-administered remedies fails to move the analysis beyond the state/market dichotomy initiated by liberal media theory (Garnham, 1986a:39-41). However, state collectivist solutions have often in practice led to direct control of the media (as in the former USSR), or to the indirect state pressures exercised in liberal democracies. In the latter instance, governments can exert a powerful influence over the media through appointments, funding, the granting of state advertising contracts, 'information control', and the establishment of policy guidelines (Curran, 1991:47; Keane, 1991:103; Murdock and Golding, 1989:189; Herman and Chomsky, 1988:24). The real challenge facing media sociology, therefore, is one of reforming the manner in which news and information is produced so as to avoid the dangers of both state and non-state censorship.

To this end, Habermas' research into the nature of the public sphere --- the realm in which citizens can develop and express their political will --- has provoked a great deal of recent interest within media studies. According to Habermas (1979, 1989), a 'bourgeois public sphere' emerged in Western Europe in the late Eighteenth Century as the ascending middle classes struggled against the powers of the absolutist state. In the process, a new social space developed between the state and civil society. Unlike the 'representative public sphere' of the feudal period within which rulers merely displayed their power before the people, the bourgeois public sphere was one within which private citizens could gather to debate and discuss issues about the exercise of power. In coffee houses, salons, reading clubs, and most notably in the press,

individuals could become informed and express opinions about the activities of government. While Habermas stresses the positive qualities of the early public sphere --- its claims of equality, universalism, and rationalism --- he also admits that such claims were hollow, for only the educated male property-owners of the day were ever granted access (Habermas, 1989:109-110).

Nevertheless, Habermas emphasizes that the *ideal* of the bourgeois public sphere is important to retain, especially in contemporary societies in which there has been a dramatic 'refeudalization' of the public sphere. Echoing earlier critiques of the 'culture industry' (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972), Habermas argues that the emergence of the mass media and the public relations industry has transformed a culture-debating public into a culture-consuming public (Habermas, 1989:160-161). Public policy decisions are now made in secret between the state and large bureaucratic interest groups (political parties, lobby groups, 'think-tanks') and then 'sold' to citizens by way of the mass media and the persuasive techniques of advertising. The public's role in debating the allocation of resources and the regulation of social relations has been superseded by profoundly anti-democratic institutions.

In this regard, Habermas' work bears a close resemblance to the democratic themes first expressed by Tonnies (1955:255-256) and Dewey (1946/1927:117-121). All three authors point to the eclipse of active public participation in a bureaucratically administered society. Witnessing the rise in prominence of 'public opinion', for example, Tonnies feared that both the state and powerful private interest groups would try, by nefarious means, to shape the public will for their own gain (1955:256). Recognizing the same tendency in American society, Dewey argued that only the public education of all citizens and the free flow of communication could lead to the recovery of public life (1927: 166).

In advancing the work of these authors, I do not mean to suggest that it is unproblematic. Habermas has been criticized --- rightly, in my view --- for his pessimistic portrayal of 'mass' society, his romantic conception of the bourgeois public sphere, the complete omission of alternative 'plebian' public spheres, and his unqualified acceptance of rational speech over and above all other forms of communication (Keane, 1984:90-93, 179; Curran, 1991:42; Scannell, 1989). Likewise, Dewey's assertion that the free flow of communication alone is enough to guarantee the formation of a democratic public tends to gloss over the existence of a whole series of inequalitarian social relations (patriarchy,

wage-labour) that require democratic reform as well. Nevertheless, I think that the democratic thought of these writers, with its participatory and communicative emphasis, provides some of the groundwork necessary for constructing a 'post-bourgeois' public sphere when it is wedded to elements of the Marxist critique of the production of news.

In order to extend media access to citizens who have been excluded, there is a need to reconceptualize communication systems, and the news media in particular, in ways that continue to challenge liberal media theory and yet recognize the limitations of the Marxist and neo-Marxist critique. A radical democratic theory, therefore, should not view the media solely as the independent watchdog of the state nor as the rigid ideological apparatus of late capitalism. Rather, the media need to be conceptualized as the potential public space in which freely communicating citizens discuss, protest, and debate issues relating to the allocation of economic, political, and cultural resources. Consequently, a truly democratic media system must seek to represent all significant interests in society. This can be accomplished through the recognition and progressive reformation of those institutional configurations that inhibit full public participation: ownership and media concentration; organizational constraints and journalistic practices; the structural imperatives of advertising-financed media production; and the class segmentation of audiences.

Ownership and Concentration: The right of private ownership carries with it a considerable degree of power over the channels of public communication and the machinery of social representation. Likewise, the ever increasing concentration of news media outlets raises real fears that a large number of public interests are not being served. Because there are many different and conflicting ways in which meaning about the world can be constructed, who gets represented, what gets left out, and how people, things and events are signified are profoundly important. However, the current structure of media ownership prevents different kinds of social groupings and representations from entering into the production of news.

Proponents of market-led approaches have, of course, not been silent on this issue. There is a wide-spread recognition that the news media have or may become, unwittingly or otherwise, tools of powerful political and corporate interests. Such fears of press 'accountability' have sparked a series of public commissions and inquiries into the structure of

media ownership and control. In Canada, for example, the Kent Commission was established in 1980 in the wake of the simultaneous closing of the *Ottawa Journal* and the *Winnipeg Tribune*, a move many saw as evidence that 'freedom of the press' was being undermined by market forces. However, no doubt because of the deeply embedded liberal belief in a press 'free' from government regulation, the Kent Commission's recommendation that a formal regulatory agency, the Press Rights Panel, be established was rejected in the face of protests from the media (Dornan, 1991:174-75). Instead, news organizations which had not already done so, agreed to regulate themselves by setting up 'independent' press councils and including regular columns in their publications in which readers' representatives could address complaints and monitor reportage. More recently, news media organizations have offered readers and spectators editorial 'talk-back' telephone lines, allowing audiences to register their views or complaints.

While press councils, readers' representatives, and talk-back lines are vitally important avenues whereby citizens may have their complaints and views heard and followed through, alone they do not sufficiently address the underlying issue of the hierarchy of power reproduced in the media. As Dornan (1991:179) notes, for example, a press council adjudicates only on whether the news media has 'played by the rules' and is therefore not in a position to question whether the rules themselves are suspect. As such, 'marginal' or 'fringe' groups who say they are systematically excluded from the media will find their complaints falling on deaf ears so long as their exclusion is based upon the accepted structure of media ownership and the routine practices of journalism.

Before advocating state regulation, however, media researchers must also be aware of the limitations of traditional state-collectivist approaches to the problems posed by private ownership and concentration. The persistent danger, even in a democratic society, is that state-funded media systems could become too vulnerable to state interference (as was the case with the Thatcher government's relationship with the BBC), or too paternalistic and rigid, impenetrable to the needs and demands of the people.

A radical democratic theory should begin to think seriously about alternative and innovative arrangements of ownership. This could be accomplished by studying the possibility and feasibility of worker-controlled news collectives and community run news services. Similarly, research could draw upon the Swedish case, for instance, in which

independent and representative press councils mete out start-up funds and subsidies to support a wide range of newspapers (Gustafsson, 1980).

In the large electronic and print news media, co-operative ownership arrangements are less likely. However, media researchers need to more fully explore the possibility that independence from market censorship could be achieved through innovative forms of public ownership. Raymond Williams (1961:344-345) has suggested, for example, that state ownership be counter-balanced by placing production decisions firmly in the hands of media workers themselves, free from the dictates of upper management and government appointees.

At the very least, we need to think about enacting provisions to provide public broadcasting systems such as the BBC and the CBC with greater autonomy from the state. This is made all the more important given the recent criticisms levelled against public broadcasting by state representatives. For example, American Senator Robert Dole recently proposed an amendment to the public broadcasting act that, if enacted, would cut-back federal funding of the Public Broadcasting System unless PBS affiliates produced more 'balanced' programming. In Canada, the right-wing economist John Crispo was appointed to the Board of Governors of the CBC, and has used his position to criticize public broadcasting and advance his own neo-liberal views. To confront such challenges, media sociologists need to think of ways of entrenching and safeguarding the autonomy of public broadcasting systems. For example, is it feasible to have government appointments replaced by elections? Could we conceive of a specific funding arrangement that is constitutionally guaranteed so that no financial threat could be made against the public networks?

Organizational Constraints and Journalistic Practices: The study of news organizations details how journalists come to rely upon elite sources and bureaucratic institutions for 'factual' information. Hence, the fear is that resource-rich elite institutions could successfully initiate news 'campaigns' to win public support for their goals (Drier, 1982). An investigation into the possibility of co-operative ownership of newspapers might signal one avenue through which those opinions that have been marginalized from the mainstream media may reach a larger audience and contribute to a more diverse public debate. While new communications technologies have been used primarily for private gain, innovations in desktop publishing and satellite transmission, if made publicly accessible,

hold out the promise of lowering the cost of entry for new small-scale producers. As Enzensberger (1974) has noted, media technologies make possible the mass participation in social life, but their current application undermines this goal. Researchers, therefore, need to explore the new technologies of communication with the aim of altering their social application to serve the democratic needs and aspirations of citizens.

Coupled with these areas of investigation, researchers need to consider the possibility of developing new journalistic practices that may enrich the diversity of news and information. While it is true that journalists face overwhelming professional and legal constraints, it may nevertheless be possible that media workers themselves begin to challenge traditional patterns of news presentation. Codes of balance and objectivity, which often work against counter-hegemonic groups, may be replaced with more investigative, self-reflexive, and critical forms of journalism.

Further, media sociologists need to emphasize that institutions that have not traditionally been open to public supervision and accountability, such as certain departments of the state and almost all private businesses --- and including quite centrally the media itself --- need to be the focus of renewed public scrutiny. In terms of the media, reader's representatives and self-regulatory bodies are not enough to secure an accountable press. Media sociologists need to recognize the value of those civil society organizations that are concerned with the media's accountability, such as the feminist collective MediaWatch and the American-based Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR). Closer collaboration with these groups will enable a greater sharing of ideas and research, and alert academics to recent developments in alternative media. Researchers must also not ignore right-wing critics of the media, such as the Fraser Institute and Accuracy in Media (AIM). These groups must be engaged in public debate so that questions of the media's accountability receive a much more widespread hearing than is currently the case. In this way, 'publicity' can be re-invested with its original critical intention --- the exposure of power and domination before the public (Habermas, 1989:195).

Advertising-Financing: While market liberals claim that unfettered media competition renders the consumer sovereign, the advertising-driven structure of the industry simply does not bear this argument out. The readers and viewers of the news do not decide what

ideas and opinions will survive in the market, because they are not the consumers. Rather, it is the advertisers whose demands are sovereign because they purchase the audience-commodity produced by the media (Picard, 1985:135).

Advertising needs, therefore, can work to exclude a wide range of views and opinions from the media. However, the elimination of advertising as demanded by some media critics is simply not a practical or even a desirable alternative. Instead of promoting advertising bans, radical democratic research needs to think about the possibility and practicality of press subsidies to offset the lack of advertising revenue.

Class Segmentation: While Habermas argues that the bourgeois public sphere was eclipsed by the development of mass politics and public administration, the rise of a 'serious' international press and the expansion of high-cost specialized information services lends credence to the argument that a supranational *private* sphere is taking shape (Sparks, 1991:69; Garnham, 1990:104-105). This process mirrors the contemporary globalization of world financial markets. Readers in New York, Tokyo, London, and Toronto have access to *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Financial Times*, newspapers that engage in the kind of rational and critical debate privileged by Habermas. But like the early bourgeois 'public' sphere, access is limited. Only educated and wealthy English-speaking people can participate. If equal access to the sources of public information, as well as equal opportunity to participate in public debates, lies at the heart of the democratic process, then this new transnational *private* sphere represents a growing threat to the abilities of citizens to participate in a democratic polity.

To offset this tendency, researchers need to think about the development of a 'quality' or 'serious' press accessible to a much broader segment of the population, a radical press that critically addresses issues of public concern. To counter arguments that there is simply no market for such a newspaper, it should be recalled that the death of the early radical press and the subsequent decline in public debate in popular newspapers was not a function of consumer taste, but of advertising demands. There is good reason to believe that a mass quality newspaper modelled after the Nineteenth Century British radical press (Curran, 1977), publicly subsidized and maintained, would find a significant audience. Such an audience, moreover, would represent the first semblance of a post-bourgeois *public* sphere in which both the power of

the state and the power of private capital could be held up to public scrutiny.

A democratic media system, therefore, must do more than simply represent the current 'balance' of forces in society. It must actively compensate those subordinate social groups who lack the necessary financial, technical, and cultural resources to engage in public debate. Access can be better guaranteed, however, only if *imbalances* in social, economic, and political power can be corrected. I have made a number of tentative proposals for future research aimed at developing and expanding a decentralized, participatory, and accountable public news media. Such a project, I strongly believe, is made ever more urgent given the rapid erosion of a public sector of communications, the growing power of transnational capital, and the increasingly secretive operations of 'democratic' governments. Media sociologists need to take 'freedom of the press' seriously, but not in its liberal guise. Instead, there is a need to propose alternative formations that will better reflect the rights and needs of citizens to be heard, to be informed, and to engage in a "democratic culture of critical discourse" (Elliott, 1982:243).

Notes

1. For helpful commentaries on an earlier version of this paper, I wish to thank Wallace Clement, Chris Dornan, and John Harp. However, the usual disclaimers apply.
2. Cited in Owen (1975:33).
3. Cited in Picard (1985:131).
4. John Stuart Mill (1972:78-113) did of course worry about the possibility of non-state censorship, but not that of media producers or market imperatives. On the contrary, he feared the tyranny of public opinion, the possibility that the 'passionate' and 'irrational' views of the masses could silence the voices of the minority, understood principally as the privileged classes. Faced with the dilemma that in the competitive marketplace of ideas it is not necessarily truth that survives in the court of public opinion, Mill supported the formation of a kind of *pouvoirs intermediaires*, representative officials who could purify and rationally sift

through the passions of the people as expressed in public opinion. Educated and powerful citizens would form an elite public whose rational and critical debate would guide public discussion. This level of debate, according to Mill, would best be directed by a free and open exchange of communication in a competitive marketplace of ideas. Hence, Mill never doubted the market's role in securing democratic freedoms such as liberty of the press, and as such he failed to see the contradiction between capitalist relations of production and the democratic ideal of equal access to the marketplace of ideas in which individual self-development could be achieved (Habermas, 1989:136-137; Macpherson, 1977:61-62; Schwarzlose, 1989:8-9).

5. Many studies, of course, draw upon insights offered by both radical elite and political economic (e.g. Bagdikian, 1985; Herman and Chomsky, 1988). My point is not that these two traditions are incompatible, but rather that they represent two *tendencies* within media studies. Radical elite theory is more concerned with questions of 'agency' (how do owners exert control), while political economic studies focus more on 'structural' concerns (see Murdock, 1982).

6. In 1855, for example, it required a capital investment of 4,000 British pounds to launch the *Daily Telegraph*. In 1870 the *Daily Chronicle* was re-established at a cost of 150,000 pounds. To found the *Tribune* in 1906-8, 300,000 pounds had to be invested and by the 1920's Lord Beaverbrook needed 2 million pounds to purchase the *Sunday Express* (Curran, 1977:214).

7. See, for example, the so-called 'blindspot debate' in Murdock (1978), Livant (1979), and Garnham (1986).

8. In terms of cost alone, the 'quality' press quite clearly discriminates against low income consumers. In Ottawa, one copy of *The Financial Times of Canada* sells for \$1.00. An issue of the popular tabloid, *Ottawa Sun*, sells for only \$0.35. Assuming that one purchased these papers over the course of a year, the difference in price would be quite substantial.

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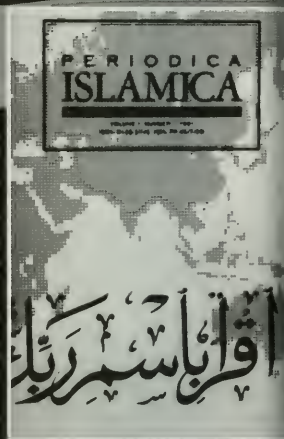
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


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REFLECTIONS ON THE REPRODUCTION OF DICTATORSHIP IN IRAN: COMMUNICATION AND DICTATORSHIP

Behnam Behnia
Carleton University

When thinking about the fall of any dictatorship, one should have no illusions that the whole system comes to an end like a bad dream with that fall. The physical existence of the system does indeed cease. But its psychological and social results live on for years, and even survive in the form of subconsciously continued behaviour. (Kapuscinski, 1985:58)

The protest movement against the Iranian dictatorial regime began in the Spring of 1977, and it gradually became a massive force that overthrew the regime in February 1979. However, soon after the revolution, the Islamic faction of revolutionary forces started to repress other political and social forces. The Islamic faction abrogated all freedoms and democratic rights gained during the revolution in order to build a society that was based on Islamic laws and led by the clergy.

A review of the analyses of the 1979 revolution reveals that scholars are divided on whether there were one or two revolutions. Those who believe in one revolution (i.e. the "Islamic Revolution") argue that rapid modernization and westernization generated anomie and moral disintegration, and fostered the desire to return to authentic culture amongst Iranians. Accordingly, these scholars consider Islam and clergymen as forces of revolution.

Scholars in favour of two revolutions (i.e. the "Iranian revolution" and the "Islamic Revolution") argue that the Shah directed repressive policies against the Left and other progressive opposition, and comparatively soft policies towards the religious groups. This unevenness put the latter group far ahead in resources such as independent organizations and financial means. According to these scholars factors such as the distribution of resources, the mistakes of the liberals and the leftists, and Khomeini's political ability made it possible for the Islamic faction to seize political power. They consider the Islamic

revolution as one alternative among others, rather than an inevitable outcome.

However, what these scholars of Iranian revolution have overlooked is the presence of a contradiction in Iranian political collective action. Here I refer to the fact that Iranians, who during the revolution demanded freedom and democracy, supported and tolerated the growth of a dictatorship of a different form when they discovered the possibility of realizing their demands after the revolution.

In this paper, the reproduction of dictatorship in Iran is studied in relation to the impacts of dictatorship on the processes of political socialization and the formation of the political culture of social groups. In order to explore the impact of dictatorship, it is not enough to learn about mechanisms and apparatuses of repression or numbers of the secret police. Instead, one should ask, what impact does living under constant fear of being reported, arrested, and tortured have on the processes of political socialization? What is the impact of living in a social environment where people cannot trust others in sharing their opinions? In other words, it is correct that the dictatorial state cannot produce a social order where its laws are "obeyed promptly, predictably", because its "bloody sword is utterly external to the wills and the consciousness of men (sic)" (Walzer, 1970:125). However, there are differences in political socialization under dictatorial or non-dictatorial regimes.

I will argue that dictatorship not only represses and censors but also educates and trains individuals. With its repression, its censorship and surveillance, dictatorship shapes and influences the social environment within which people live, interact and grow up. Therefore, dictatorship is not a power "localized" in the sphere of politics (Lefebvre, 1991:147). It is a power that "produces reality" (Foucault, 1979:194) by influencing the structures and functions of the agencies of political socialization. This in turn conditions the formation of the political culture of members of society.

In this paper, distorted communication is considered as one of the channels through which dictatorship deeply influences society. It is through communication that social groups and their identities as well as political culture are formed. Dictatorship's repression of the democratic rights undermines the conditions of communication and produces distorted communication. The presence of the distorted communication, in turn, affects the structure of social relationships and institutions, the processes of coordination of action and collective identity formation of social groups, and the size and structure of social gatherings. Accordingly, distorted communication may force people to develop new

institutions or to modify the structure of already existing institutions in order to sustain the processes of communication. For example, they may find trust and truth in their friendship and kinship relationships, rather than in the activities of formal organizations.

Following this model, I will study the Iranian political system, distorted communication, and the institution of *dowreh* (circle) in order to illustrate political values and norms that are socialized by them. However, this is not to say that other agencies of political socialization like family, school, and mass-media are not important in these regards.

Historical Background

In 1921 Reza Khan, a military commandant, staged a bloodless coup. In 1926, after establishing himself as the "dominant personality" in Iranian politics, made himself the Iranian Shah (Halliday, 1979:23; Wilber, 1986:125-126). In 1941 the Soviet Union and British armies invaded Iran and Reza Shah, who sympathized with Hitler and opposed the Allies' plan of sending supplies to the Russian front through Iran, abdicated in favour of his son Mohammad Reza (Halliday, 1979:24; Wilber, 1986:131).

After the fall of the Reza Shah, Iranians, after almost two decades of severe repression, began to enjoy freedom of expression and organization. During the 1941-53 period the political scene of Iran was dominated by the Iranian communist party, the Tudeh, and the secularist National Front, not the Islamic forces. Emerging soon after the fall of the Reza Shah, the Tudeh Party had a total of 100,000 active members, a 355,000 member trade union and three cabinet ministers in 1946 (Abrahamian, 1982:303).

Since the end of the Second World War, Iranians had been in favour of the nationalization of the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (Halliday, 1979:24-25). In 1951, Mohammad Mossadeq, the leader of the National Front, became prime minister. Mossadeq nationalized the oil industry as soon as he took office. This, however, put his government in conflict with the Shah and the British and US governments. In September 1951, the British oil company removed all its staff, and closed down its oil installations. At the same time, the British government reinforced its naval presence in the Gulf (Abrahamian, 1982:268; see also Carter, 1978:59-60). On July 1952, Mossadeq clashed with the Shah on the nomination of the war minister.

Following the Shah's refusal of his nominee, Mossadeq resigned and appealed directly to the public, publicly criticizing the Shah for violating the constitution. Following popular pressure, the Shah had to ask for Mossadeq's return to office (Abarahamian, 1982:268-272).

The first military coup against Mossadeq failed and the Shah escaped to Rome. However, after three days, the second military coup, organized by the CIA, succeeded in August 1953. After the coup, the Shah abrogated all democratic rights and banned and crushed all opposition. In 1975, the Secretary General of Amnesty International said: "No country in the world has a worse record in human rights than Iran" (Halliday, 1979:85).

In 1960-1963, as a result of an economic crisis, several strong protest demonstrations took place in Iran. In several cases the regime used the army in order to control the situation. The regime of the Shah, however, was in difficulty not only from domestic problems but also from the new US Administration's pressures. As Halliday (1979:26-27) writes, the Kennedy Administration made it

be known that it would only continue to support the Shah on condition that he put through a programme of reforms. A \$35 million US loan was made dependent on certain policies being implemented...within which land reform held a special place.

In 1963, the Shah announced his "White revolution". His reforms, however, dissatisfied religious leaders, in particular, the issues of land reform and women's rights. In July 1963, for three days religious forces rioted under the leadership of Khomeini. Despite the presence of general discontent, the riots were restricted to a small number of towns (including Qom), and few towns and workers, civil servants and students did not join them (Abrahamian, 1982:425-26). It is important to note that when the Islamic forces were protesting against the Shah's reforms, in the Iranian universities the slogan of the protestors was "Yes to reforms; No to Dictatorship!"

The 1960-63 defeat of the opposition marked "the end of any hope that the forces released during the 1941-53 period could soon reverse the verdict of the 1953 coup" (Halliday, 1979:234). In the late 1960s, different opposition groups, influenced by the Cuban and Vietnamese Revolutions, emerged in Iran and opted for armed struggle. However, by early 1976, as a result of heavy losses as well as the

development of schisms among them, they failed to realize their plans to spark the popular revolution by their armed struggle and sacrifice.

The 1979 Revolution

After the December 1973 oil price increase, Iran's annual revenue quadrupled, jumping from \$5 billion to \$19 billion (Graham, 1980:16; see also Halliday, 1979:138-139). The Shah predicted that by the year 2000, Iran would become one of the top five world powers (Nyrop, 1978:6). However, after two years, international oil demand dropped. Considering that oil revenue made up 78 percent of the Iranian budget the impact of such fluctuations in international demand was dramatic (Graham, 1980:100). After a brief period of economic boom where "Iran's GNP grew by 30.3 percent in 1973-1974 and by a further 42 percent in 1974-1975", there was "the economic debacle" (Amir Arjomand, 1986:397; see also Nafisi, 1982:200, Hetherington, 1982:373).

Iranians started to face such difficulties as a high rate of inflation and shortages of housing and commodities. Housing became one of the main social problems. The annual inflation rate reached "about 30 percent" (Kazemi, 1980:89). The regime blamed bazaaris for inflation, and in August 1975 started the 'anti-profiteering' and 'price war' campaign. This campaign generated more shortages, stimulated the black-market, and added the bazaaris to the malcontents (Graham, 1980:96). Regarding the devastating impact of this anti-profiteering campaign on the bazaar, Parsa (1989:103) writes that by

October 1977, approximately 109,800 Tehran shopkeepers, out of a total of 200,000, had been investigated for price-controlled violations....According to the Ministry of Interior, 20,000 shopkeepers had been jailed by the end of 1977. By fall 1978, the nationwide total of shopkeepers in violation of the controls was 220,000.

Furthermore, the regime challenged the economic viability of the bazaar. State corporations were established to import and distribute basic foods, such as wheat, sugar, and meat (Abrahamian, 1982:443). In 1976 it was suggested that the bazaar be demolished. These factors pushed bazaaris into the opposition. As one bazari said, "if we would let him, the Shah would destroy us" (Parsa, 1989:102).

The bazaar is not only a commercial centre but also a community

that "includes one, or several, mosques, public baths, the old religious schools and numerous tea houses" (Graham, 1980:223).

Financially, the bazaar is a strong economic centre that controls the carpet trade and other major export items (e.g. nuts and dried fruits). This enables the bazaaris access to foreign exchange. In total, the bazaar accounts for two-thirds of domestic trade and accounts for at least 30 percent of all imports (Graham, 1980:224). For instance, by the time of the revolution Tehran's central bazaar had,

close to forty thousand shops and workshops, one-half of which were located within the covered bazaar and the remainder in the immediate vicinity. Shopkeepers outside the covered bazaar followed bazaari politics, even though their shops were not part of the bazaar proper. (Parsa, 1989:92)

Bazaar mobilization has always played a crucial role in Iranian political history. The financial support of the bazaar, for instance, was decisive in the victory of the 1979 Revolution. The bazaar financially aided the university students and teachers as well as the striking workforces, civil servants, and oil-workers (Graham, 1980:225; see also Zabih, 1979:27-30).

In the 1970s, the Shah increased his efforts to reduce the clergy's power. In 1971, for example, the Shah established 'The Religious Corps' that were sent into the villages as Islamic preachers (Wilber, 1986:178). In addition, the government increasingly took control of holy endowments (*owqaf*) (Bill, 1982:25).

In 1975 the Shah decided to establish a one party political system and pressured Iranians to join it. The Shah said:

We must straighten out Iranians' ranks. To do so, we divide them into two categories: those who believe in Monarchy, the Constitution, and the Sixth Bahman Revolution (the Shah's White Revolution); and those who don't....A person who does not enter the new political party and does not believe in the three cardinal principles which I referred to, will have only two choices....Such an individual belongs in an Iranian prison, or if he desires he can leave the country tomorrow, without even paying exit fees. (cited in Halliday, 1979:47)

The new party, the Resurgence Party, with its branches in all cities and

villages, became a new instrument of control in Iran.

Despite the widespread discontent, Iranians could not express their frustrations in mass protest as a result of the presence of strong repression. Jimmy Carter's stress on the theme of human rights during his electoral campaign, and the fact that he mentioned Iran as a friend country with a bad record, worked in favour of the Iranian opposition.

In order to please the new president, the Shah made some mild political reforms. For instance, in early 1977 a new law was passed which declared that "all political detainees had to be charged or released within twenty-four hours and that trials for political opponents were to be held by civilian rather than military courts" (Parsa, 1989:108; see also Graham, 1980:211; Abrahamian, 1982: 500). Iranian intellectuals and former opposition politicians, taking advantage of Carter's human rights campaign and the Shah's controlled liberalizations, started to speak up early in 1977 (Abrahamian, 1982:500-510; see also Zabih, 1979:49). As Moghadam (1989:152) summarizes:

social democratic and liberal intellectuals began to write open letters of protest and criticism. A number of associations and societies were formed and revived, such as the Association of Iranian Jurists, the Writers' Society, and the National Association of University Teachers, which demanded improved civil and political rights, and end to censorship, and academic freedom

After almost two years of mass protests, strikes and street fighting, the Shah left Iran, and in February 1979 the revolution succeeded. There emerged a situation where political forces were in balance. The Islamic forces were divided among themselves into three factions: fundamentalists, moderate and radical. The Left was strong but highly divided among themselves and included independent, pro-Soviet, Maoists, pro-Albanian, and Trotskyist groups. There were also national minorities, like Kurds, Turkemen and Arabs, who were not Shi'a Muslims and demanded regional autonomy from the central government. In addition, there were liberal, social democratic, and independent organizations.

Critical Review of the Analyses of the 1979 Iranian Revolution

Scholars of Iranian revolution are divided on whether there were one or two revolutions. Generally speaking, these two positions are based on two approaches, namely breakdown¹ and the resource mobilization² approaches.

Those following the breakdown approach argue that what underlaid the widespread desire for revolutionary changes was "a fundamental disorientation and anomie more than a superficial and short-run frustration of material expectation" (Amir Arjomand, 1986:397). Swenson (1985:124), expressing this line of analysis, suggests that the presence of rapid modernization and anomie, as well as the leadership position occupied by the Islamic clergy Islam and the clergy as the motivated the Revolution:

the Persian carpet of interwoven cultural codes experienced transformation and modification under the rapid, secularist, "modernization" processes during Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi's regime. Rapid social change is intrinsically psychologically disequilibrating; that experienced in Iran...inherently implied radical alterations in 'making sense' of material and moral value changes. This disequilibrating experience leads to a sense of incohesion, fragmentation, disintegration in the passing away of traditional ways of rendering meaning.

Explaining why the revolution took place in 1979 and not before, she points out that "the toll of rapid modernization had not yet been wrought upon the masses." She goes on to state that the revolution "was brought about through the mobilization of the masses at the local level by mullahs and enlightened Muslim martyrs" (1985:125; see also Arani, 1980:14-15; Kimmel, 1989:494). Islam was "both the means and the end of this revolution" (Kimmel, 1989:507; Amir Arjomand, 1984; Skocpol, 1982:275). These authors emphasize 'rapid' modernization and westernization as the cause of the revolution. However, they do not explain why the 1925-1941 modernization by the father of the Shah³ was not more rapid and traumatic than that of 1960s-1970s. Why is it that

the strongly anti-clerical measures of Reza Shah (1925-41) did not arouse any massive protest movements or concerted action by the ulama and/or the bazaaris,

whereas his son's measures toward the ulama (which were....less extreme and less of a sudden wrench with Islamic tradition) did arouse protest. (Keddie, 1982:288)

Scholars in favour of two revolutions, using the resource mobilization approach, argue that at the time of revolution the Left and other progressive forces were far behind the religious groups in terms of independent resources.⁴ They do not believe that the revolution was made by Islamic ideology and leaders. First of all, the clergy were late in joining the revolution. In late August 1977, when Khomeini realized the lack of initiative on the part of the clerics, he issued a statement inviting them to take advantage of political reform. Khomeini said:

today we are faced with an opportunity [an opening] in Iran and you should take advantage of it....Today members of various parties find fault and voice their criticism in signed letters to the Shah and the government. You should write too and a few of the learned members of the clergy should sign also....others have done so and we have witnessed that they have said a lot but nothing has happened to them. (cited in Nomani, 1990:8-9)

In addition, Moghadam (1989: 152) writes that "it was not until late 1978 that the Ayatollah Khomeini became the undisputed leader of the revolution. Even so, the Islamicists saw fit to rule with the National Front and other secularists, liberals, and social democrats, for the first year." Thus, the revolution was not started by Islamic leaders.

The lack of independent resources whereby the opposition could gather and organize themselves without fear of being attacked and arrested by the police, led Iranians to use mosques, funeral ceremonies and other safe institutions. For instance, in October 1977, the Iranian Writers' Society organized a number of poetry readings. These were held at the Irano-German Institute in Tehran in late October and attracted crowds of over 10,000 (Graham, 1980:210; see also Zabih, 1979:20, Kamrava, 1990:87). What is significant about this event is that at the place of gathering, the Irano-German Institute, diplomatic immunity protected the participants. The following month, however, when the Writers' Society organized another poetry reading program on the Tehran university campus, participants were attacked by the police. The same phenomenon happened to bazaaris who in the initial stages of the

uprising mobilized outside the mosque. Because of repression, and in absence of alternative channels of mobilization, the bazaaris changed their position, and began to encourage the clergy to oppose the regime (Parsa, 1989:95; see also Zabih, 1979:31).

Those in favour of one revolution stress the presence of Islamic demands. For instance, Kimmel (1989:507) in demonstrating Islam as the motive of revolution, quotes Khomeini's remark: "We did not want oil. We did not want independence. We wanted Islam." Amir Arjomand (1986:405) mentions Khomeini's famous statement, "we did not make the Islamic revolution so the Persian melon would be cheap", in order to show that the revolution was driven by Islamic motivations rather than economic ones (see also Snow and Marshall, 1984:139).

What should be stressed is that these authors quote Khomeini's remarks after seizing power, and not before. Theorists in favour of two revolutions, by contrast, emphasize how Khomeini's positions during and after the revolution were 180 degrees apart. During the revolution, Khomeini said that under the Shah regime "the individual's freedoms are eliminated, elections are prohibited, press and political parties are suppressed, agriculture is ruined" (*L'Unité*, 5.6.1978; see also Bayat, 1983:33-34; Parsa, 1989:209). Khomeini accused the Shah of "condemning the working class to a life of poverty, misery and drudgery, creating shantytowns and neglecting low-income housing (Abrahamian, 1991:113). Therefore the reaction of a factory worker to Khomeini's statement is understandable. He said:

they say we have not made revolution for economic betterment! what have we made it for, then? They say, for Islam! What does Islam mean then? We made it for the betterment of the conditions of our lives. (cited in Bayat, 1987:48)

Khomeini in Paris did not disclose his real agenda. For example, in a Paris interview, Khomeini responding to a question about "Whether the Islamic government means theocracy?" answered:

No. We do not intend to govern. We only indicate to people objectives and vindications of Islam. Since the majority of Iranian people are Muslim, the Islamic government means the government sustained by the majority of people. (*Paese Sera*, 24.10.1978)

Although the above sketch of Iranian revolution confirms the two-revolutions arguments, these scholars have overlooked the support and tolerance of the masses for Khomeini's repressive policies after the Revolution.

Political Socialization and Political Culture

Political culture consists of political values and attitudes, as well as beliefs about forms of political interaction and political institutions. As Verba (1969:513) explains, "it refers not to what is happening in the world of politics, but what people believe about those happenings." Political culture shapes and influences the processes of interpretation and understanding of political life.

Political socialization consists of a life experience process through which members of a society acquire their political culture. Political culture is formed as the result of the processes of political socialization in agencies such as school, family, workplace, mass media, political parties, voluntary associations, as well as experiences with the political system (Verba, 1969:551; see also Kavanagh, 1972:35). According to Dowse (1986:215) there are different types of agencies in which joining them "involves the learning of skills, attitudes, and norms much more specific to the institution."

Following this argument, I maintain that depending upon the values and goals of the agencies there will be different political cultures. In this regard, Gramsci's distinction (1989:181) between the 'corporate', 'class' and, 'hegemonic' or universal levels of consciousness is used. The corporate level refers to the moment when the members of a social group "are conscious of its unity and homogeneity, and of the need to organize it, but in the case of the wider social group this is not yet so" (Gramsci, 1989:181). For example, trade unions at this stage of development tend to "articulate a 'corporate consciousness' which focuses on their shared interests, but this may co-exist with rivalry against some other group of workers" (Hunt, 1990:312). The class awareness level consists of a situation where the members of a social class become conscious of their common interests "but still in the purely economic field" (Gramsci, 1989:181). The hegemonic or universal moment refers to a level where a class transcends "the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interest of other subordinate groups too" (Gramsci, 1989: 181; see also Hunt, 1990:312).

Following this distinction, I differentiate between institutions and agencies of political socialization with 'corporate' and 'universal' values and goals. Depending on the type of the agencies their members are socialized with corporate or universal conceptions of democracy. A social group which is at a corporate level is engaged in articulating and defending its own corporate interest and develops a corporate rather than a universal concept of democracy. For them, democracy consists of an ensemble of rules that protect the immediate interests of that particular social group.

Dictatorship and Communication

Communication has an essential role in the processes of political socialization. It is through the process of communication that individuals reach an understanding and agreement on an issue, realize their shared common interests, and coordinate their actions. The formation of collective identity and political culture of a social group is the result of the processes of communication within and between social groups and classes. Dictatorship, with the suppression of democratic rights, indeed undermines the conditions of communication.

Habermas, in his theory of 'pragmatic universal', develops the theory of communicative action in relation to the *conditions* of communication, rather than to the content of communication (i.e. information) or means of communication. According to Habermas there are four conditions: comprehensibility, truth, trust, and normative background which need to be fulfilled in order to have a communicative action. In a process of reaching understanding the speaker must

choose a comprehensive expression so that speaker and hearer can understand one another. The speaker must have the intention of communicating a true proposition....so that the hearer can share the knowledge of the speaker. The speaker must want to express his intentions trustfully so that the hearer can believe the utterance of the speaker (can trust). Finally, the speaker must choose an utterance that is right so that the hearer can accept the utterance and speaker and hearer can agree with one another in the utterance with respect to a recognized normative background. (Habermas, 1979:2-3)

As soon as one of these elements, for any reason, comes under question, the stream of communication halts and it can be interrupted or distorted.

In order to rectify the disturbed communication it is essential that "no external constraints" prevent "participants from assessing evidence and argument, and in which each participant has an equal and open chance of entering into discussion" (Giddens, 1985:131). These conditions are not met in a dictatorial regime and the following section deals with the issue of communication under dictatorship.

Vertical, Horizontal, and Oblique Voices

Hirschman, in his argument on the differences between democratic and non-democratic social environments, has developed two terms, 'voice' and 'exit', as means of communication between the citizens and the government, consumer and seller, employer and employee. In a democratic social environment, an unsatisfied consumer or citizen can communicate his/her feelings by voice (writing, wording, marching in the street, and so on), or by exit (changing the store, voting for another political party). In a non-democratic situation, however, one or both of these mechanisms may be absent. If there exists only one store, one employer, or one political party, then exit is impossible, making voice the only option. The worst scenario, however, is when a person can use neither of these mechanisms, as, for example, in totalitarian one-party systems, terrorist groups, and criminal gangs (Hirschman, 1970:121). Accordingly, in a dictatorial regime, exit and voice are absent; exit becomes 'exile', voice becomes 'silence' or 'oblique voice'.

O'Donnell, based on his experience in Argentina, distinguishes 'vertical voice' from 'horizontal voice'. The vertical voice consists of voice that is "addressed to the 'top', by customers or citizens, toward managers or governments," but when "I am addressing others, or others are addressing me, claiming that we share some relevant characteristics, we are using horizontal voice" (O'Donnell, 1986:250). What must be emphasized is the importance of the role of the horizontal voice in the formation of political culture and collective identity. In a democratic environment:

we assume that we have the right to address others, without fear of sanctions, on the basis of the belief that those others are 'like me' in some dimension that at least I consider relevant. If we actually recognize ourselves as a 'we' (for example, as workers who have the right to unionize), we have taken a necessary, and at times sufficient, step towards the formation of a collective

identity. (O'Donnell 1986:250)

Under dictatorship, "oblique voice" or symbolic language replaces the horizontal voice, which means certain unconventional...ways of dressing, clapping hands with excessive enthusiasm in front of the public authorities, going to the recital of singers or musicians who were known to disagree with the regime, some quick glances in the streets and other public spaces (O'Donnell, 1986:261) .

In summary, the argument on the voice suggests that dictatorship, while inhibiting the use of horizontal voice, encourages the use of vertical and oblique voice. The fear of using horizontal voice and the presence of mistrust lead individuals to an atomized and privatized life based on mistrust. Accordingly, they approach with caution the "few remaining occasions of sociability" (O'Donnell, 1986:260; See also Politzer, 1989).

The Iranian Political System

Bill defines the Iranian political system as a "circular" or "web" system with the Shah at the centre surrounded by an elite network. The rivalry and conflict between elites at all levels of Iranian society stems from their struggle to gain greater favour with then Shah (Bill, 1972:40-41, 42; see also Bill, 1973:141). In this political system the Shah was the ultimate decision maker and the network that served as channels of access included

ministers, generals, courtiers....relatives, personal friends, old classmates and trusted advisors. These personalities 'who circle the power of the monarch' filter and relay information and petition to the Shah. They, in turn, are surrounded by their own entourage each member of [whom] serves as a lower level but additional channel to power. (Bill, 1973:134)

Due to the lack of formal political institutions, members of the political network as well as their drivers, cooks, and secretaries were sought after as intermediaries between the petitioner and the power. The Shah's administration was highly "centralized, totally unintegrated, and responsive only to him" (Fatemi, 1982:49; see also Halliday, 1979:54, Kamrava, 17-23). The Shah appointed "prime minister, ministers, deputy ministers, ambassadors, governors, and executives of government

organizations" (Fatemi, 1982:51).

Even membership in the web system did not create security. As Zonis (1971:241) comments, "when the Shah reached the conclusion that a given member of the elite [was] dysfunctional, in any sense, no amount of wealth or membership [could] save the individual from dismissal, disgrace, or demotion" (see also Bill, 1973:144).

The Iranian political system disturbed the processes of social group formation by both reinforcing vertical voice and obstructing horizontal voice. The atomization of the members of social groups was shared by all social classes. For instance, many scholars believe that the collapse of the Iranian army after the departure of the Shah in 1979 was due to the absence of the spirit of comradeship in the army. This occurred because the generals had to report to the Shah and no general could visit Tehran or meet with another general without the Shah's specific permission (Halliday, 1979:68; see also Afshar, 1985:186-189).

Distorted Communication in Iran

This section aims to illustrate the impact of dictatorship on four conditions of communication in Iran.

Dictatorship and Intelligibility: Under dictatorship the intelligibility of language suffers. Dictatorship, by inhibiting the use of horizontal voice, encourages the use of oblique voice or symbolic language. For instance, Bill (1972:76) reporting his survey of 50 Iranian poems writes that there is:

an extraordinary emphasis upon such themes as 'walls', 'loneliness', 'darkness', 'fatigue', and 'nothingness'. These poems deplore the situation of the Iranian intellectual and obliquely criticize and condemn the existing sociopolitical system in which the intellectual is chained.

Accordingly, in Iran such terms as "oppressiveness, darkness...collapse, quagmire, putrefaction, cage, bars, chain" were prohibited because they "could hide allusions to the Shah's regime" (Kapusinski, 1985:44). This created paranoia among both Iranians and the censors, because it became difficult to understand the real intention of a speaker or writer.

Dictatorship and Trust: Under dictatorship the issue of trust, as a result of the high risk, becomes the main element of communication. The presence of mistrust amongst Iranians is referred to by several authors. It does not have any class boundaries and crosses all social strata. Zonis (1971:268) writes that "the inability of Iranians to count on, to be assured of the meaning of the behaviour of others is taught early. So are Iranians taught early in life to mask their own thoughts" (see also Westwood, 1965:124).

The following example illustrates how deeply political repression can influence and shape everyday life and ways of seeing of members of a dictatorial society. It is about a conversation between an old man with a bad heart and a SAVAK agent (Iranian secret police)⁵ at a bus stop in Iran on a hot afternoon. The old man said:

"It's so oppressive you can't catch your breath". "So it is," the Savak agent replied immediately, edging closer to the winded stranger; "It's getting more and more oppressive and people are fighting for air." "Too true," replied the naive old man, clapping his hand over his heart, "such heavy air, so oppressive." Immediately, the Savak agent barked, "Now you'll have a chance to regain your strength," and marched him off.

The other people at the bus stop

....had been listening in dread, for they had sensed from the beginning that the feeble elderly man was committing an unpardonable error by saying "oppressive" to a stranger. Experience had taught them to avoid uttering such terms as oppressiveness, darkness, burden, abyss, collapse....because all of them, these nouns, verbs, adjectives, and pronouns, could hide allusions to the Shah's regime.

The strong presence of paranoia and suspicion is illustrated in the rest of account:

for a moment....a new doubt flashed through the heads of the people standing at the bus stop: What if the sick old man was a Savak agent too? Because he had criticized the regime (by using "oppressive" in conversation), he must have been free to criticize. (Kapuscinski, 1985:44-5)

Dictatorship and Truth: In Iran, instead of truth there existed rumour. The presence of severe censorship and control over the means of communication and information, as well as government fabrications, led Iranians to distrust their mass media. In Iran truth was related to trust.

Fatemi (1982:58) points out how rumour encouraged Iranians in their struggle against the Shah:

the hypothesis that the Shah was no longer the master of his destiny gained particular momentum in the first week of January 1979, when the leaders of the United States, Britain, West Germany, and France attended their long-scheduled summit meeting on the Island of Guadeloupe. According to the Teheran Grapevine, the participants decided, among other things, that "the Shah must go."

Dictatorship and the Normative Background: The intervention of the Shah in all spheres of social life, made Iranians perceive him as the main enemy. In this way the sources of all social problems were reduced to the Shah (Westwood, 1965:134). The normative background was narrowed down to the opposition to a common enemy and Iranians communicated and understood each other's grievances on this basis. This narrow normative background created what Khomeini called the "unity of purpose" (Khomeini, 1981:253; See also Moghadam, 1987: 13). Green (1982:87), for example, writes that

a prominent academic and researcher at the Plan and Budget Organization revealed in an interview during the midst of the revolution, 'I hate Khomeini, but if anyone says anything bad about him I get angry. Why, you ask? Because I hate the Shah even more!'"

Iranians believed that once they had overthrown the Shah's regime all problems would be solved. As a result of the distortion of communication they did not realize that the basis of one's opposition to the Shah was different from another's. As the result of the distortion of elements of communication, the processes of collective identity formation of social groups was disturbed, wherein, members of social groups did not draw their social and class boundaries by becoming aware of their identity in the processes of communication.

The Institution of the Dowreh

After the coup d'etat of 1953, the suppression of political organizations and persecution of all forms of political activities led Iranians interested in politics to informal, small and selected forms of group. Except for a few who decided to stage organized political activities and therefore undertook the underground form of political activity, the people opted for *dowreh* (circle), a small social setting of trusted persons. As Green (1982:43) explains, "an activity such as arguing about politics, generally a risky proposition, was often undertaken within the security of groups that were composed of old friends who had known and trusted one another for years."

Dowreh consists of a small number of people, from 10 to 20, who "organize about some common purpose and meet on a regular basis. Dowrehs exist for card playing, poetry, music, and, of course, politics" (Zonis, 1971:238). Dowrehs meet monthly, weekly, or more often. The way that Miller determines the number of dowreh participants indicates the informal character of this institution. The number of people is "limited to those who can stand beside a buffet dinner table or sit along the walls of a living room" (Miller, 1969:164).⁶

Miller (1969:159), distinguishing between "dowreh" and the "system of dowreh", writes that "the dowreh is an upper class social habit, while the system refers to a particularly Persian behaviour of political activity and communication." Dowreh, according to Miller (1969:163-164), has a "general meaning of social circle, salon or clique. It expresses the gracious manner associated both with past Iranian social patterns and with attitudes acquired by those who have been educated abroad or who have lived for considerable periods in the West."

Writing about the dowreh system, Miller (1969:159) says "in the absence of effective political parties, the dowreh system is the substitute used by Iranian politicians to discuss, organize and communicate with their followers" (see also Banuazizi, 1977:238). The dowreh system includes the bazaari shopkeepers, artisans and labourers who meet each other

regularly in bazaar caravansaries, teahouses and restaurants that serve as the headquarters for those in a particular craft or trade. Very much in the pattern of the old guilds, merchants and workers....will gather together over tea or kebab, to discuss business, exchange rumour and news and, inevitably, debate politics. (Miller,

1969:165; see also Spooner, 1971:171-172; Thaiss, 1971:201-202)

Dowreh, indeed, is a circle of homogeneous people who share similar socio-political ideas and backgrounds as well as interests and perspectives. It is not a "public" of people who are divided in their ideas on an issue, nor was it a "public sphere", namely a social realm open to all citizens "with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions- about matters of general interest" (Habermas, 1974:49; see also Habermas, 1989).

Borrowing the Gramscian distinction, one can argue that dowreh system is a social setting at a corporate stage where a corporate perspective can develop. The formation of homogeneous groups that were not permitted to interact outwardly with other groups led them to develop a corporate or non-universal perspective of democracy.

Dowreh participants were engaged in elaborating, defining and reinforcing the immediate interests and ideas of their members rather than that of the larger or the whole society. They did not, and were not able to, develop a universal perspective as a result of the lack of communication and social struggle with other social forces. Dowreh reinforces norms and values shared by its members and is a place for articulating their immediate needs. Therefore, the concept of democracy that could emerge in this kind of gathering was a corporate one: democracy not as a universal value, but as a system of rules that satisfies and protects the needs of the small group.

To summarize, the absence of democratic rights that guarantee the fulfilment of four conditions of communication, led Iranians to seek guarantee in small, informal and selected forms of groups. However, in these groups it was the corporate rather than the universal perspective of democracy that developed.

Conclusion

The corporate conception of democracy had played an important role in the reproduction of dictatorship in Iran and the change of Iranian political collective action. After the victory of the revolution, Khomeini and his faction had the ability to attack one section of opposition while exempting the remainder and maintaining their support or tolerance. For instance, Khomeini called for the repression of the independent press because, according to him, their critiques of the government would

during the revolution became an obstacle to the anti-imperialist struggle. The leftist groups, stressing the difference between the bourgeois and revolutionary democracy, did not support the protest of independent journalists. However, as soon as censorship was exercised over leftist publications, they came to recognize the government as repressive.⁷

The role of corporate perspective of democracy in the process of the establishment of the new dictatorship can be summarized as follows:

when the national minorities mobilized for autonomy, bazaaris did not join their struggles. Students and the Fedayeen were the only groups who actively supported the national minorities. When universities came under attack, bazaaris and liberal organizations approved of the assault because students had shifted to the left....By the time bazaaris began mobilizing and came under attack, other groups and classes had either been demobilized or did not have an interest in joining their struggles. As a result, repression against one social group or class did not invoke new protests by other groups, which might have led to the escalation of conflict and, consequently, neutralized repression. (Parsa, 1989:295-296)

The corporate perspective of democracy functioned in dividing the Iranian political and social forces in the sense that they agreed on the suppression of other groups' rights. The corporate conception of democracy allowed Khomeini's success in following his suppression of democratic institutions and rights, as well as in crushing political, religious and ethnic groups with the mass support or tolerance.

Notes

1. See Tilly, 1975:4-6.
2. On Resource Mobilization theory see among others: Tilly (1978); Zald (1977, 1988); Turner (1987, 1992); and Freeman (1979).
3. Reza Shah secularized the judiciary and educational system of Iran that were in the hands of clergy. In addition, in the political sphere, Reza Shah's policies reduced the political power of traditional groups such as the clergy. The percentage of clerics serving as deputies in parliament declined from 40 percent in the sixth majles to 30 percent in the seventh

majles to zero in the eleventh majles which met in 1937. At the same time, Reza Shah favoured greater participation by women in social life. He ordered that the chador, or traditional women's veil, be abandoned in favour of western clothing. The Majles even passed a 'uniform dress law' instituting compulsory Western dress for men (Parsa, 1989:36; see also Akhavi, 1980:37-55, Abrahamian, 1982:140-144, Carter, 1978:54).

4. Moghadam (1989:153), comparing the resources, writes: "It is sufficient to note that in Iran on the eve of the revolution, no liberal or left-wing parties or institutions operated legally. On the other hand, there existed a nationwide network of mosques, theological seminaries, religious shrines, charitable endowments, and religious lecture halls.... The religious thought was given predominance and allowed dissemination in a way never enjoyed by the left or even liberals. The *resources* that were available to the clergy had been consistently denied to the Left" (see also Moghadam, 1988; Green, 1982:xiii; Abrahamian, 1985:149-174, Akhavi, 1980:129). Hiro (1988:20) writes that "estimates of qualified clerics vary from 90,000 to 120,000 and there are an unknown number of unqualified village preachers, prayer leaders, theological school teachers and procession organisers."

5. In 1957, the ill-famed secret police SAVAK (National Security and Information Organization) was created with the help of Israeli and US advisors. Branches of SAVAK were present in universities, factories, and offices. Their activities were so multifarious that today "almost anyone who does voice protest about the government runs the risk of being suspected of being a SAVAK agent" (Halliday, 1979:82; see also Abrahamian, 1982:435-37; Rudolph, 1978:372). Although the exact number of its personnel is not available, "informed United States government sources estimate the number of full-time personnel at 10,000. The agency is also believed to employ a large number of part-time informants... estimated...as high as 200,000" (Rudolph, 1978:373).

6. The Shah's regime did not tolerate formal groups and organizations. Bill (1972: 47-48) writes that in "1961, for example, eight middle-class Iranian friends and scholars met and formed a dowrah to discuss sociopolitical issues. They agreed upon certain areas of concern and mimeographed a confidential one-page statement presenting their mutual

opposition to corruption, injustice, and oppression. Each member took a copy and the rest were locked away. Five months later, the Chief of the Secret Police called on one of the men and confronted him with a copy of the statement. It was one of the original eight copies. The dowrah broke up immediately. This kind of occurrence explains a great deal about the secret police and the dowrah system, but it also sheds light on one of the major reasons why social interaction in Iran is extremely informal. In the episode described, there was one real element of organization and formality --- the printed statement. And this was the evidence that was used to destroy the dowrah and to threaten the lives of its members."

7. The same mechanism was used in suppressing women's rights in Iran. See Haines and Woods, 1986:43-47; Sansarian, 1982:99-102; Afshar Soraya, 1983:157-162; Tabari, 1982:126-140; Abrahamian, 1989:189-190.

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*Translations from Italian and Persian sources are mine.

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CANONS, PUBLISHERS, AND LITERARY NATIONALISM: TOWARD A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Ian Chunn
Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing
Department of Communication
Simon Fraser University

"Our age has been canon-minded," remarks Hugh Kenner (1984), and the following notes are intended to participate in what Dermot McCarthy (1991) has called Canadian literature's "founding monomania," its nationalistic premises. Studies of canons and canon-formation have been something of a growth industry in academia for over a decade, with most of the action taking place in the humanities. The publisher's role has never been adequately stressed, however, and it is toward correcting that omission that the present study has been undertaken.

The *locus classicus* for an overview of the topic is the pair of issues of *Critical Inquiry* later issued from the University of Chicago Press as *Canons* (1984). The essays contained therein are rife with definitions of the key concept, one of the most appealing of which is Kernan's: "to mean (roughly) an enduring exemplary collection of books, buildings and paintings authorized in some way for contemplation, admiration, interpretation, and the determination of value," (1984:177). His interest is in music, where of course the term 'canon' carries a pun, but which is instructive to consider in comparison to literature, if only to see how much as a given we accept the centrality of certain 'classical' composers. We, in the twentieth-century, have cultivated nineteenth-century 'masterpieces':

The idea of a canon had taken hold powerfully during the nineteenth century.... Beethoven always stayed at dead center...members of non-Teutonic nations grew increasingly restive over the difficulty of gaining places for their heroes. For from Hoffman's time on, the ideology which nurtured that growth included a strong component of nationalism along with historicism [and] organicism --- a concept applied not only to individual artistic structures but also to the canon itself. (Kernan, 1984:184)

The contested nature of the canon is a function of its concern with values, which are always radically contingent and the product of the dynamics of an economic system (Herrnstein Smith, 1984:15). Every literary work is the product of:

a complex evaluative feedback loop that embraces not only the ever-shifting economy of the artist's own interests and resources...[but] also...all the other diverse forms of evaluation by which the work will be subsequently marked and its value reproduced and transmitted; that is, the innumerable implicit acts of evaluation performed by those who, as may happen, publish the work, purchase, preserve, display, quote, cite, translate, perform, allude to, and imitate it...and also such activities as the awarding of literary prizes, the commissioning and publishing of articles about certain works, the compiling of anthologies, the writing of introductions, the construction of departmental curricula, and the drawing up of class reading lists. (Herrnstein Smith, 1984:29)

Herrnstein Smith makes it clear that canon-formation is very much a social process, and Chandler (1984) suggests this invites a historicizing approach. To counteract this tendency, he supplies some of Raymond Williams' thoughts on 'tradition', claiming that *mutatis mutandis*, the same might be said of the canon. We tend to see tradition:

not as an active and continuous selection and reselection, which even at its latest point in time is always a specific set of choices, but now more conveniently as an object, a projected reality, with which we have come to terms on its terms, even though these terms are always and must be valuations, the selections and omissions, of other men [sic]. (Chandler, 1984:197)

A deep-rooted tradition in the West is that of the Judeo-Christian bible, which the distance of time and popular unfamiliarity have homogenized into an unexamined monolith. Yet it may be seen as a paradigm of the questions of canon-formation and the promulgation of canonical texts, in that its writings may have been evaluated not according to 'literary criteria' but according to power criteria (Bruns, 1984:78). Tracing the outlines of what may be considered an early form of nationalism, Bruns develops the conflict that existed between the priests and the prophets. Bruns cites Ellis Rifkin on why Deuteronomy was promulgated as an authoritative text: "So long as the prophets had the freedom to speak out in Yahweh's name, no institution was safe, and

no authority, other than prophecy, sacrosanct," (Bruns, 1984:79). In response to this situation, the priests of the Second Temple founded a theocracy which resolved the crisis of Yahwism by placing its authority in a book (Bruns, 1984:80). Prophets were now limited; only from the authority of the Pentateuch could they speak.

Another 'national' literature was formed a few hundred years later in Augustan Rome. The imperial capital attracted talents such as Ovid, Horace, Propertius, and the immediately-canonized Virgil. These authors encompassed all varieties of poetic mode, and their literature drew its basic impetus from another culture: they blended Greek elements with their Roman themes in what seems to have been "a deliberate attempt to create a Roman national literature to rival the artistic monuments of classical and archaic Greece," (Zetzel, 1984:113,107). One of the most successful models was Virgil's epic about the Trojan founder of Rome, Aeneas:

[O]ne work that has always been considered canonical...is Virgil's *Aeneid*. It is canonical in that it has been, since the poet's death in 19 B.C., a school text and thus a part of the literary vocabulary of all educated people; it is canonical, in T.S. Eliot's refined and delicate definition of the 'classic', in exhibiting an extraordinary range of sympathies and sensibilities in a pure and elegant diction; and it is canonical in what might be called the ancient sense (although the word 'canonical' was not applied to literature until the eighteenth century), as an epic poem of broad scale and heroic subject, the highest and most important of all literary genres. (Zetzel, 1984:107)

By the eighteenth century, vernacular literature in English "had accumulated enough history to be thought about historically," (Kenner, 1984:364). Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry*, and Samuel Johnson's *Lives of English Poets* served patriotic and political needs, establishing a specifically national rather than global canon of 'classics', and defining the superiority of the national character (Chandler, 1984:202). It is true that Richard Mulcaster had argued as early as 1582 that English had become acceptable as a 'literary' language because its grammar had by then been extensively studied. His *Elementary* coincided with the spirit of Elizabethan nationalism, and its thesis would have suited those keen on increasing the English military and political presence in Europe (Court, 1992:12). English as a language was also

finding a "doctrinal centre of authority" among Dissenters. However, what finally produced the official recognition of English literature in the universities was

the belief, promoted first by Adam Smith, that the study of the English language and its literature could be treated as an academic discipline, rather than as a simple exercise in the selective reading of great literary works of the British past....Smith believed English literary study was ideally suited to meet the challenges of industrialism and the increasing political influence of a rising commercial bourgeoisie. (Court, 1992:13).

The written word had greater persuasive power in the industrial age, and industrialists conceived of literary education as a form of assimilation into an all-encompassing national identity. In fact, this literary nationalism was perceived as an opportunity for the reconciliation of all social classes (Court, 1992:40).

Another society keen to reconcile classes in a professed democracy was the breakaway republic, the United States of America. Eighteenth century anthologies there fostered a literary nationalism, motivated by a desire "to build America's sense of identity by gathering an independent national literature to match and strengthen the country's newly achieved political independence....The term 'American literature', rarely used before the 1780s, became commonplace after the 1783 Treaty of Paris," (Golding, 1984:281). In the nineteenth century, literary nationalism became even more programmatic, with American critics calling for a national literature and praising it wholesale. Eager to convince British skeptics that an American poetry was developing, anthologists presented it in its historical range and claimed for it a moral advantage, superior to perceived European decadence (Golding, 1984:281). During the 1820s, a significant expansion of poetry writing was precipitated by this widespread literary nationalism, but by the end of the century, with the country's sense of political and literary accomplishment established, supportive anthologies documenting "the unique national characteristics and moral purity of American verse" were no longer needed (Golding, 1984:294). American literature was no longer "English literature that happened to get written somewhere else," (Kenner, 1984:370).

Indeed, American literature flourished in the twentieth century, and while modern American poetry has devolved largely to the university

presses and the academy, contemporary American fiction has achieved recognition through profitability and the book market (Ohmann, 1984:378). Characterized as "a nearly closed circle of marketing and consumption," (Ohmann, 1984:380) the path to pre-canonical status for a novel may be sketched out as follows:

It was selected, in turn, by an agent, an editor, a publicity department, a review editor (especially the one at the *Sunday New York Times*), the New York metropolitan book buyers whose patronage was necessary to commercial success, critics writing for gatekeeper intellectual journals, academic critics, and college teachers. (Ohmann, 1984:385)

By contrast, the situation in Canada is a good deal simpler (Mathews, 1991:155). Commercial success is not required (e.g. *As For Me and My House*), nor is best-sellerdom (e.g. *The Mountain and the Valley*). An elite group of trend-setting journals need not single out the work. It is the end of the process that is most important, and that is "the simultaneous embracing of the work by the classroom and the academic journal," (Mathews, 1991:155). While those who control the U.S. scene may seem small in number, in Canada it amounts to little more than university teachers of English who profess some degree of interest in Canadian literature.

The marginal position of such a discipline would hardly have surprised Matthew Arnold who scoffed, "Imagine the face of Philip or Alexander at hearing of a *Primer of Macedonian Literature*: are we to have a *Primer of Canadian Literature* too, and a *Primer of Australian*?" (cited in Surette, 1991:21). Nevertheless, we have moved a great distance from Arnold's position, and today it is quite legitimate to consider Canadian literature and to ask about forces involved in determining its canon. Ideally such an examination would involve an analysis of market forces, of the publishing and bookselling industries, of government attempts to patronize a national literature and its supporters, and of the dissemination of literary value in newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals, and books (Lecker, 1991:4). My current research concentrates on one aspect of the publishing industry, literary publishing, and its interaction with governments, to clarify the canon-forming process in English Canada.

Even though the process of canon-formation in Canadian literature may have largely taken place since the late 1960s (Scobie,

1991:57), it is nevertheless the case that almost as soon as English Canadians began writing, they began to try to define Canadian literature (Bennett, 1991:131). Once again, poetry anthologies prove an enlightening source of commentary. In 1864, E.H. Dewart claimed that "a national literature is an essential element in the formation of a national character. It is not merely the record of a country's mental progress: it is the expression of its intellectual life, the bond of national unity, and the guide of national energy," (cited in McCarthy, 1991:33). By 1889, W.D. Lighthall had noticed a new "tone of exultation and confidence which the singers have assumed since Confederation," (cited in McCarthy, 1991:35) and by the mid-1920s Logan and French perceived "how, gradually, (Canadian writers) expressed in literature the slowly emerging consciousness of a national spirit and a national destiny in the Dominion," (McCarthy, 1991:38). The national imagination coincides with the nationalist spirit, and cultural nationalism stands as the subtext of Canadian literary history. Lorne Pierce of the Ryerson Press echoes Dewart's observation concerning literature and national unity: "'the true source of our national greatness' will not be understood until French and English authors share equally in any attempt to trace the evolution of our national spirit," (cited in McCarthy, 1991:44). In truth, a sense of frustration at having to share the Canadian literary world with a large population group who wrote in another language was one of the few common grounds between French and English critics when they discussed the idea of a national literature (MacDonald, 1992:100).

Canon-formation is an intrinsically conservative process (Scobie, 1991:57), and the tendency to resist change is greatest in national canons, as they function to define a national literature in turn tied to the sense of nationhood. National identity, the growth of which seems to have been the 'plot' of Canada's national history, has been a crucial feature through the nation-building era experienced since the nineteenth century (Bennett, 1991:134):

While expressions of concern about the need for a canon are a tradition in Canada the number of people who have been involved with its creation and preservation has been relatively small. Defining the canon has been of real importance to Canadian writers, and to a few academics, journalists, and publishers. However, the growth of governmental interests in the development and maintenance of Canadian culture, an interest that has been translated into funding for the arts, has made the

canon an important institution. The expansion of the Canada Council and provincial arts councils, and the commercialization of things 'Canadian' as socially valuable have all given new and more general immediacy to the questions of what the important works in our literature are and by what standards we make judgements....With the expansion of the university system during the 1960s and with the expansion of the study of Canadian literature within the universities that took place at the same time, Canadian writing has assumed a new role in the marketplace. (Bennett, 1991:147)

The elucidation of the publisher's role in these developments will help us understand the dynamics of cultural production in a country where such activity has traditionally been marginalized.

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BOOK REVIEW

Richard Collins, *Culture, Communication and National Identity: The Case of Canadian Television*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

Collins' trans-Atlantic perspective lends some valuable insights to academic and policy debates on the importance of domestic cultural industries. His continentalist position is clear: though "both communications and the state have been central to Canada's continuing process of nation-building and self-assertion" (5), an out-dated nationalism must give way to the fact of a "weak linkage between national sentiment --- generally strongly held --- and low consumption of Canadian production in what is widely held to be the most important of the cultural industries: television" (339).

The book begins with an historical survey of Canadian broadcasting policies. Finding that these are nationalist-oriented policies, which presume to strengthen national identity by supporting nationalist cultural industries, Collins proceeds to critique the notion and practice of nationalism, both theoretically and within the concrete Canadian context. He criticizes dominant assumptions of dependency and national identity as they have been applied to issues of Canadian regionalism and continentalism. Collins argues finally that the Canadian intelligentsia and other elites assume wrongly the precepts of media imperialism, misunderstand the link between the state and symbolic culture, and perpetuate a false sense of nationalism.

Collins identifies a central, long-standing objective of Canadian broadcasting policy to strengthen cultural identity. Included in the recommendations of the 1957 Fowler Commission Report, this objective persists up to the 1988 House of Commons Standing Committee on Cultural Communication report, which states that "broadcasting policy is Canada's premiere cultural policy" (43). These cultural goals have, however, been blocked by the impossibility of reconciling a majoritarian nationalist vocation with a minoritarian public service (334-35). While the minoritarian goal is to Canada's credit, the nationalist goal is not necessary, and is based on a false premise (140).

Collins argues that central to the variants of nationalism is the view that they serve the objective of obtaining and using state power. To this end, nationalist ideology attempts to enforce a congruence of political will, economic activity and cultural identity. The ideological project is, for Collins however, an outdated one which denies a fact of the contemporary world economic order: nation-states are no longer self-sufficient and are becoming unstoppable, integrated and interdependent. The force of this inevitable process of interdependence is the world economy itself --- something which Canadians could not and should not attempt to influence (xi). Collins objects to the "anterior values of national Canadian-ness" as if these values never existed, but are rather imagined by the Canadian nationalist who is "hostile to the United States, capitalism, television, modernity, and rational thought" (121). The few espousing the rhetoric of Canadian nationalism are merely those who stand in the way of the inevitable world of international competition (xvi, 28, 349).

Among these sorts is the Canadian intelligentsia. They must back down from a position of false authority and give up the practice of dictating the Canadian consumption of foreign culture. They must give up aspirations to control cultural production for their own selfish gains (339) and accept a new world order of cultural and economic interdependence. Collins makes repeated reference to the emerging European Common Market, and predicts that it will face a cultural internationalization similar to Canada's (ix, xiii, 5, 337). Collins, however, avoids the conclusion that the future interdependent Europe is less an acceptance of a new world order, than it is a fear for the survival of independent European states, given a growing threat of American economic expansion (hence, 'Fortress Europe'). Suggesting that Canadians should not similarly resist this same threat, amounts to a failure to distinguish between 'united against' and 'dependent upon', while calling them both 'interdependent'.

The future interdependence of Europe is, for Collins, one in which the increasing demands of broadcast programs are "of interest to different language and cultural communities" (337). Collins argues that Canada's bilingual and multicultural broadcast system provides a perfect laboratory to develop new products for the coming European market. Though claiming that this opportunity is undermined by nationalist broadcasting goals (336), he does not offer a clear explanation. If these goals are to oppose American broadcast culture, are they not also to oppose a narrow cultural and linguistic autarky? Is it not the nationalist policy goal of providing a multi-cultural, bilingual and Canadian

alternative to American broadcasts which has created this bold new model and 'testing ground' for Europe? Canada's option in the new European cultural market was only afforded by the symbolic cultural sovereignty which Collins suggests Canadians give up.

In overview, Collins' rejection of Canadian nationalism (or assumptions thereof) is the basis of his rejection of policy objectives to support cultural identity through a national broadcasting system. Not only is this offered as an academic advancement that is proof that the state and culture must be separated (326-29), but also as support for the current European and North American continentalist agendas. The value of Collins' argument depends upon whether one accepts that Canadian communications policies in support of cultural identity are necessary. That this debate in Canada will not be resolved soon is bitterly acknowledged by Collins who, in the final analysis, admits the shortcomings of his 'martian view' of Canada.

David S. Hubka
Carleton University

NEWSFORUM

Conference Report

On January 22, 1993, Carleton University hosted an all day seminar in Canadian Communication Policy at the School of Journalism and Communication. The seminar: *Publics, Markets and the State*, featured presentations from academia, the public and private sectors.

PANEL 1:

Revisiting Convergence: Information, Technology and Communication Services, included speakers: David Ellis of Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, Heather Menzies of Carleton University, and Michael Ferris of the CRTC. Ellis, referring to aspects of his latest book *Split Screen: Home Entertainment and the New Technologies*, stated that the convergence of broadcasting, computing, and television has meant the CRTC has been more concerned with orderly market place distribution of video and information services than regulating to serve public interest. Menzies suggested that one of the features of convergence in post-industrial society is the end of old mass culture. The new mass culture tends to be more defined in Canada by trade relations such as NAFTA which will have devastating effects on protecting Canadian content and cultural industries. Ferris focused on CRTC restructuring of the Canadian broadcasting system which has been influenced by structural changes such as U.S. direct broadcast satellites, digital video compression and extended basic cable tiers.

PANEL 2:

The New Broadcasting Environment: Audiences, Technologies, Issues included speakers Ivan Emke of Carleton University, Kenneth Katz of the Department of Justice, and Alexander Crawley of ACTRA. Emke raised a number of questions regarding who or what are audiences. If they are composed of many divergent groups rather than a unitary mass how do

regulatory authorities determine what policy is in the public interest? Katz explains that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms will increasingly force the CRTC to confront its own role and reexamine its historical attitude to broadcasting regulation with the development of niche market services such as single religion or politically oriented channels. Crawley noted that the creative artist has had to rapidly adapt because of changes in new technologies. As consumption for cultural products increases it should mean an increase for cultural creators but in Canada this will not happen without the state, cultural policies and cultural content. George Fierheller of Rogers Cantel Mobile Communication stated that from the communication industries' point of view the CRTC needs to open competition to serve the public needs and demands for communication services.

PANEL 3:

Telecommunications Market Services and the Public Interest, included speakers: David Colville of the CRTC, Joan McCalla of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications, and Larry Shaw of Communications Canada (Department of Communication). Colville described the changed arena for CRTC telecommunication regulation as one which not only protects monopoly subscribers but that includes the benefits of competition which accrue to the public in a fair and equitable manner. McCalla focused on the current provincial telecommunication strategy initiative which addresses telecommunications as both an important sector of the provincial economy and as an enabling infrastructure for all aspects of life. Shaw provided an overview of a number of policy issues currently being addressed by the federal Department of Communications. Guiding policies for telecommunication s include keeping telecommunication local rates low, maintaining universality, and providing the most good for the most people through access to new services.

PANEL 4:

Does the Work Get Out? Reporting on Communications and Cultural Policy included speakers: Tony Atherton of *The Ottawa Citizen*, Val Ross of *The Globe and Mail*, and Alberto Manguel, a Toronto author and critic. Atherton explained how newspapers work against the reporting of cultural policy because reporters who cover this area often have other priorities. As a result, cultural policies are covered haphazardly, without context and sometimes fall through the cracks. Ross asks, in cultural policy reporting, what is the role of the reporter? And what, for example, is the public's interest in the public interest? Reporters have to be able to tell people why they should care, what is at stake and what the long term effects of a decision or a policy change might be. Complex policy issues involve telling a story in the context of a bigger picture. Manguel explained that book reviewing has become more of a token showcase in newspapers. The review is less of a focus on the book and tends to be more a profile of the author. Often, U.S. publishers and reviewers set the parameters of what a 'good' book review is. This means that reviews of Canadian books are defined in an American context and literature from Latin America often is seen as quaint local colour.

Vanda Rideout
Carleton University

ALTERNATE ROUTES

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1S 5B6

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